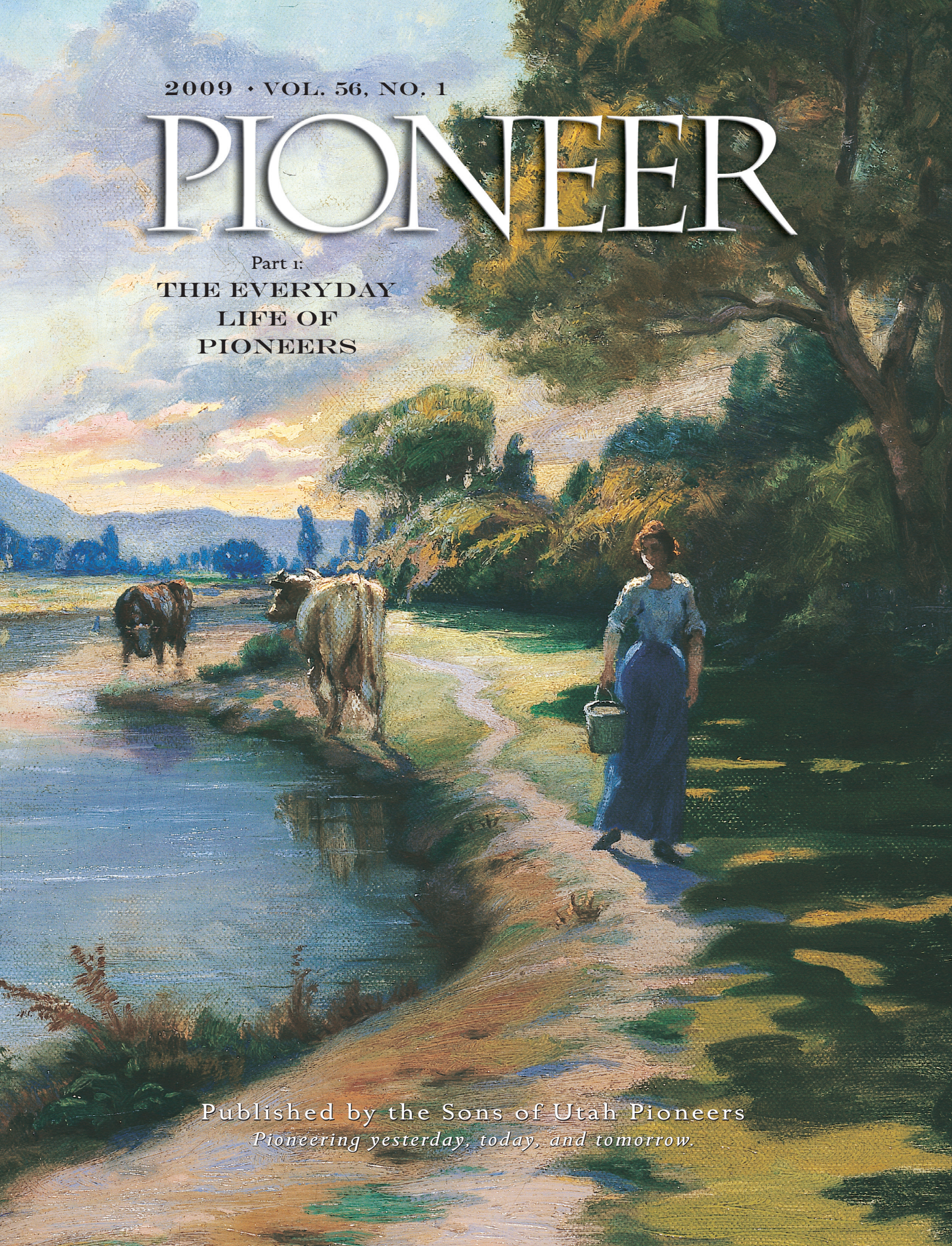


2009 • VOL. 56, NO. 1

PIONEER

Part I:
**THE EVERYDAY
LIFE OF
PIONEERS**



Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers
Pioneering yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

PIONEER

FEATURES

BATTLE OF THE HOMEFRONT: The Early Pioneer Art of Homemaking, <i>by Andrew H. Hedges</i>	2
"I have eaten nearly everything imaginable . . ." PIONEER DIET, <i>by Jill Mulvay Derr</i>	14
FRONTIER WOMEN & LONELINESS, 1880–1910, <i>by Ronda Walker</i>	26
INDIANS, HAIR & LAUNDRY: A Look at Lye Soap, <i>by Kristi Bell</i>	28
THE PROGRESS OF PIONEER HOMES, FURNITURE, & CLOTHING, <i>by Milton R. Hunter</i>	30
JOHN H. MORGAN: Soldier, Educator, Missionary	34

COVER ART: Jordan River, *by Lorus Bishop Pratt* (1855–1923). He was a son of noted Mormon pioneer and churchman Orson Pratt. Lorus's first studies in art were at the University of Deseret with George Ottinger and Danquart Weggeland. Pratt traveled to New York City and London in 1876 for further studies. He was selected by the LDS church to study art in Paris at the Academie Julian in order to paint murals for the LDS buildings and temples. This cover art is a charming example of his rural landscape scene.* (See "The Birth of Utah Impressionism: The Paris Art Mission of 1890," *Pioneer magazine*, Summer 2000, 4–15.) ©Courtesy Utah Arts Council

*Source: Dictionary of Utah Art by Robert S. Olpin



DEPARTMENTS

President's Message: <i>by Roger C. Flick</i>	1
Letters to the Editor:	32
Issue Sponsor: JOHN H. MORGAN, JR.	33

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers is to preserve the memory and heritage of the early pioneers of the Utah Territory. We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination.

The society also honors present-day pioneers worldwide in many walks of life who exemplify these same qualities of character. It is further intended to teach these same qualities to the youth who will be tomorrow's pioneers.

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❖ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Roger C. Flick, BYU LIBRARY

It is through my mother's lineage that I lay claim to a committed pioneer heritage. While growing up in Southern California, I knew little of my pioneer heritage and it wasn't until I began taking course work in family history, genealogy and church history at Brigham Young University that I became interested in seeking out my heritage. Conflicting copies of one of my pioneer ancestor's diary existed. In locating the original I had an opportunity to transcribe it and eventually make it available to members of my pioneer family organization. That small experience—reading and transcribing every word—brought me closer to my ancestor, Jonathan Oldham Duke, than any other historical activity in which I had been involved.

Some of his opening remarks were: "It perhaps will be proper here to remark that myself and wife had been members of the Primitive Methodist Society or church in England and I had been a preacher of that order but the intelligence or truth I sought was not to be found there and I sighed for the order and doctrines that were taught by the Ancient Apostles of Jesus Christ. Ah, little did I think the God of Israel had already commenced to restore the same order of the Kingdom and although I had been in America ten years I had not yet heard this Gospel until a few weeks after my wife's baptism." He relates experiences in Nauvoo, his expulsion from Nauvoo by the "mobocrats," his sickness, his day-by-day account of the westward trek, his feelings, hardships, good times, and his eventual settlement in Provo, Utah, where he

served as the first bishop of Provo 1st Ward. His vest pocket diary was given to me and was eventually deposited in the BYU Special Collections Library. It has since been digitized for all to view.

When I first read the mission statement of the National

Sons of Utah Pioneers, I thought of my pioneer ancestors, particularly of Jonathan Oldham Duke. He reflected the characteristics mentioned in the mission statement, wherein it states that "we honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity and unyielding determination." He possessed all of these characteristics as evidenced in his diary. Even though I have never met him, I have drawn closer to him and his family than to any other ancestor because of his willingness to keep a diary. His recordings of pioneer life and events has given me a historical anchor wherein I can compare and attach other historical events. Recordings of his wives' comments in the Relief Society minute books have given interesting accounts of beliefs, family life, and homemaking activities involving clothing and food preparation.

As I've read about the simplicity of the lives of early pioneers, I'm grateful for their faith in God, their love and kindness to one another, and their willingness to be of service to God and country.

The *Pioneer* magazine allows us to be transported back in time for a moment to reflect upon the faith and devotion of those who have gone before, for the great things they accomplished in spite of the few things they had to work with. Most were poor in worldly possessions, but rich in other ways. As someone once said, "A rich person is not one who has the most, but is one who needs the least." ▣

CORRECTION: In our past issue of *Pioneer* magazine, 2008, Vol. 55, #4, on page 1, the folk song "Once I Lived in Cottonwood" was incorrectly credited as written by Charles Lowell Walker. The correct author of the song is George A. Hicks, who was called to settle in Dixie, 1862, and missed his home in Salt Lake. Thank you to Mrs. Betty Woodbury.

Our next issue will feature part two of the everyday life of the pioneers—social dance, recreation, courting.



BATTLE *of the* HOMEFRONT:

The Early Pioneer Art of Homemaking

This essay focuses on the pioneers' home life during these difficult early years and on their efforts to establish homes and provide for their families under less-than-ideal conditions. While both men and women engaged in this undertaking, the bulk of the everyday tasks within the home fell on the shoulders of the women. They, more than the men, took responsibility for attending to the children's needs, for planning and making meals out of the available foodstuffs, and for creating a home—a real home—out of whatever shelter was available at the moment. . . .

SHELTER

. . . It is no surprise to learn that the first "house" many immigrants found themselves occupying was the same "house" they had occupied coming across the plains: their wagon. Hannah Nixon's experience in this regard was a common one. Moving to Salt Lake City from a small settlement on the Jordan River, she and her family moved their wagon box onto the floor of an unroofed, one-room house and spent the winter of 1851–52 living there. Although they built a two-room house the following spring, a subsequent call from Brigham Young to settle St. George required them once again to make their wagon their home until a more permanent house could be erected.¹ At least a few families continued to utilize the trusty wagon box even after such a home had been built;

by Andrew H. Hedges, HISTORIAN, BYU PROFESSOR

A time when living in Utah promised little more than hard work and hunger as the Saints faced challenges in some of the more remote settlements as they established themselves in the Great Basin and surrounding territory.



Joseph Fielding's family, for example, which arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848, elected to sleep in their wagons even after they had erected a one-room log cabin.² . . .

Cooler by far, but complete with their own set of problems, were the dugouts a number of immigrants used . . . constructed by digging a short, broad trench horizontally into the side of a hill or an embankment. The trench comprised the walls and floor of the home and was covered with brush, branches, canvas, and the like for a roof. . . .

Ann Howell Burt has left us with a lengthy and vivid description of life in such a dwelling. A native of Glamorganshire, Wales, Ann immigrated to America as a child in 1851, came west to Utah in 1852, married, and

found herself living in a dugout in summer 1863. "The neighbors," she recorded in her journal, "call it the Castle of Spiders and it is well named, for I never saw so many reptiles and bugs of all kinds." She continued: "For several mornings I was puzzled to find my milk-pan skimmed; could not understand what could have done it. So the other evening I sat down behind the door, with my knitting, to watch proceedings, and what was my surprise to see a huge bull-snake come crawling out from the head of our bed and swaying gracefully toward my crude cupboard, began to skim my cream. Now I cover my milk tightly."³

Things did not improve over the course of the summer, as subsequent entries indicate: "This is a hideous

For many immigrants, their wagon became their home . . .



place. Some days ago, I killed a rattlesnake with my rolling pin, as he came crawling down the steps. I was just cooking supper and the baby was on the floor or rather the ground, for we have no other floor. I was badly frightened. . . . A few days ago, while keeping the flies off the baby's face as he slept on an improvised bed on the floor, I discovered, to my horror, a large tarantula crawling toward the child. I seized the broomstick, thrust the end of it at the tarantula and when it took hold of the thing which was provoking it I hurriedly put it into the fire. . . . We are going to move away from here," she wrote. "I am weary from fighting all these reptiles."⁴

The next level of sophistication beyond the dugout was the well-known log cabin . . . equipped with nothing more than dirt floors that could be cleaned—if such a word is appropriate—by wetting the dust and sweeping it out with a homemade broom.⁵ As if that were not enough of a trial, Mary Horne, one of the pioneers of 1847, reminds us that the timber out of which these cabins were constructed was full of bedbugs and that during the first few years of settlement in the Valley, "mice were very troublesome." These uninvited houseguests intruded in such numbers, she continues, that the settlers "could see their ground floor tremble as [the mice] ran about under their covered trails. And when the stones at the corners [of the cabins] supporting their roofs, loosened and fell by the rain, the frightened mice ran in hordes. Sometimes as many as 60 would be caught before going to bed. [The pioneers] had to make their own traps, and one contrivance was a bucket full of water with a board sloped at each end, balanced on the edge, and greased. This caught dozens of mice."

Mary closes her account of this infestation by noting that "the first cat and her progeny were invaluable."⁶

The early Saints learned from the records kept by trappers, mountain men, and early explorers that Utah was a desert. Accordingly, they built their early cabins with the understanding that the roofs need

"MICE WERE VERY TROUBLESOME. . . . [SETTLERS] COULD SEE THEIR GROUND FLOOR TREMBLE AS [THE MICE] RAN ABOUT UNDER THEIR COVERED TRAILS. AND WHEN THE STONES AT THE CORNERS [OF THE CABINS] SUPPORTING THEIR ROOFS, LOOSENED AND FELL BY THE RAIN, THE FRIGHTENED MICE RAN IN HORDES. SOMETIMES AS MANY AS 60 WOULD BE CAUGHT BEFORE GOING TO BED."

—Mary Horne, 1847

When Grandma Gurr was a child, her mother told her of the hardships endured by those who settled in Orderville. They had no houses, so the settlers had to dig holes in the ground. These they covered with brush. When it rained they had to leave, and she said as soon as it would start to drizzle, the people would begin to pop up like prairie dogs. They were all very poor and could not afford shoes, so in the winter they would take a hot board with them when they went to school. They would run as fast and as far as they could, and then they would put the board down and stand on it to warm their feet and then begin over again. Granddad Gurr was sixteen before he had a pair of shoes.

—William A. Wilson, "The Folk Speak: Everyday Life in Pioneer Oral Narratives," in Ronald W. Walker and Doris R. Dant, eds., *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers* (Provo: BYU Press, 1999), 495–96.

not necessarily be impervious to rain. Before experience taught them to do otherwise, they made cabin roofs by placing a layer of grass and weeds, "then a good layer of earth," over poles placed as close together as possible.⁷ The finished product was almost flat. Although noted for its warmth, it apparently did little more than slow the rain—which came in torrents at times. Leaking roofs turned the Saints' homes, with their dirt floors, into muddy messes. As one unfortunate sister recalled, "We had rain out of doors and a mud-fall in the house, for the continued fall of rain so thoroughly soaked the earth over head that the downpour was mud, good-honest-mud." She continued: "You can imagine the condition our beds and bedding were in, as long as there was a dry spot, we would move it there, but after a while there was no dry spot. One of the family had a babe nine days old, she stayed in bed till it was soaked through, then she was placed in a chair before the fire with an umbrella over her head."⁸

Mary Horne noted that "the flags and dirt formed but a slight protection [against the rain], and it was a strange sight to see [the people] sitting at their tables or on the bed, their heads covered with an umnbella while the rain was coming through the roof long after it had ceased outside."⁹ Melting snow had the same effect on the small cabin Williamena McKay lived in at Huntsville while her husband served a mission to Arizona. The snow caused the cabin's chinking to dislodge, turning its earthen floor to mud.¹⁰

Perhaps the most enduring house the earliest settlers could build out of native materials was one of adobe or rock. These were generally better insulated against both the cold and the heat than other shelters, they did not disintegrate in the rain, and they generally provided an effective barrier against the incursions of wildlife. . . .

While dugouts, shanties, cabins, and adobe or rock dwellings constituted the principal types of



Three years passed before the family grew enough vegetables to spare some for the table...

homes for the Saints, circumstances occasionally required them to live in other structures as well. Eva Beck and her family, for example, who immigrated from Germany in 1863, spent their first winter in Lehi living in a former chicken coop.¹¹ Similarly, Lucina Boren of Wallsburg lived in an empty granary in Heber during hostilities associated with the Black Hawk War.¹² Such structures were utilized for both relatively infrequent and short periods of time but constituted an important aspect of the Saints' housing prospects all the same. . . .

MEALS

Pioneer women usually assumed responsibility for preparing meals for the family. This was no easy task in early Utah. Prior to the coming of the railroad, stoves and specialized utensils for preparing food were scarce, as their weight and bulk frequently prevented their being hauled across the plains in wagons. Primitive means of preservation meant that only a few types of foodstuffs could be imported from the outside as well, and initially, pioneers used much of their supply as seed for the following year rather than for food. Poor yields due to crickets and droughts continued to limit the amount of the harvest the Saints could use for food. Mary Horne reported that three years passed before her family grew enough vegetables that they could spare some for the table.¹³

The net result of these forces was that early pioneer women again faced the all-too-familiar problem of making do with what little they had on hand. Many, predictably enough, utilized a wide variety of native plants—including the famed sego lily bulbs, milkweed shoots, “marrowfat peas,” wild parsnips, currants, pigweed greens, and even mushrooms—as they sought to supplement their families' diets.¹⁴ Conditions slowly improved as the Saints perfected irrigation techniques, obtained a greater variety of seeds, and grew

THE SEGO LILY is a sacred plant in Native American legend. *Sego* is a Shoshonean word thought to mean “edible bulb.” The flower thrives in desert-like conditions. It blooms in May and June. There are about seven variations of the plant in Utah.

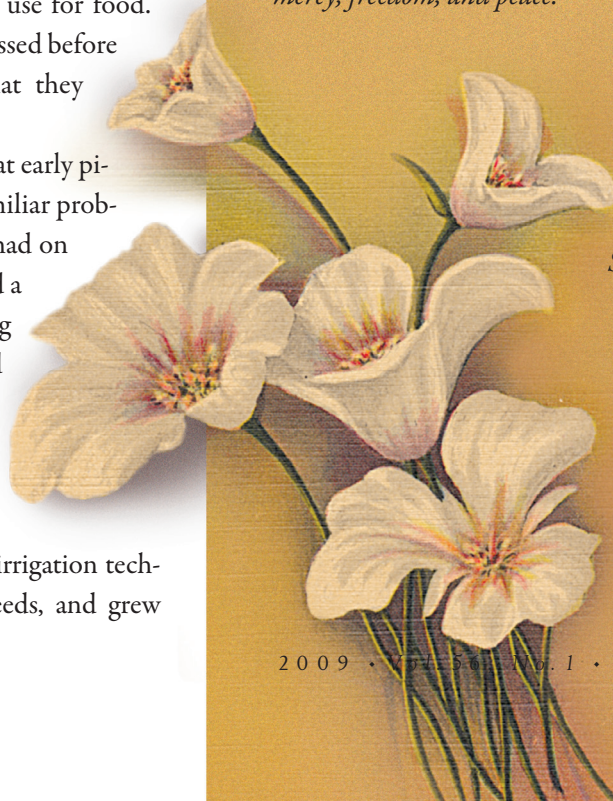
The pioneers of 1848–49 ate the sego lily bulb to help ward off starvation. Some bulbs were as large as walnuts, but most were the size of marbles. The bulbs were best fresh-cooked because they turned thick and ropery when cool.

By the 1880s those early settlers who had eaten the bulb felt it set them apart from newcomers to the Salt Lake Valley. The old-timers thought that to have suffered through the hard times of the early Utah colonizing showed their tenacity and righteousness. For those pioneers it became a badge of virtue to have been a “bulbeater.”

On March 18, 1911, the Utah State Legislature designated the sego lily as the state flower. Early in 1913 the LDS General Relief Society Board chose it as their official emblem. . . . Karl E. Fordham's poem “Sego Lily” portrays the plant as an image of home, mercy, freedom, and peace.

—History Blazer,
December 1995

*“Sego Lily”
Sego lily in
the valley,
Sego lily, colors rare;
In the beauty
peaceful emblem
on hillside so fair;
Then we'll sing
our song
“Praise to thee,”
Flower giv'n by
heav'n tenderly.*



accustomed to the region's unpredictable weather, but native plants continued to be a staple in outlying areas like Liberty—where Leora Campbell and her husband ate nothing but sego lily roots “for three or four days at a time”—well into the 1860s. After the poor harvest following the entrance of Johnston's Army into the territory in 1858, Saints like Ann Burt turned again to roots even in more centrally located areas.¹⁵

Under such conditions, the ability to improvise was at a premium. Water mixed with parched barley, wheat, and even peas substituted for coffee; cornstalks and watermelons were processed into molasses. Settlers ate the rinds of melons after having first boiled them in molasses.¹⁶ Ingenuity, coupled with a strong stomach, became even more important during the lean winter

months, when supplies were low and the chance for outside aid fell off to almost nothing. Mary Horne recalled one family whose stores gave out midwinter but who had a ready supply of fresh milk. Allowing a portion of each day's milk to stand and thicken, they would then mix it with fresh milk and “eat it for bread.” This constituted their sole source of subsistence for six weeks.¹⁷ Ann Burt noted in her diary how one family tried to enhance its meager supply of flour over the winter of 1855–56 by mixing it with sawdust—a failure, it turned out. She also recorded the desperate straits of her own family. “We were given a piece of meat by Brother V,” she wrote. “He had been up in the mountains and carried home a couple of dead animals that had died of starvation during the cold winter. Well,

Materials to furnish homes were extremely limited and primitive . . .



there was not much meat to it, and when it was boiled it was black; still it satisfied our hunger. . . . Oh for a few of the good things we had at home!"¹⁸

Even when enough food was on hand, the monotony of the fare could challenge even the best cook's skill. While waiting for her fiancé to arrive in the Valley, Maren Nielson, a convert from Denmark, had her first taste of boiled wheat and fried jackrabbit, a dish which "tasted rather good," she reflected, although it "was different than anything I had ever eaten." The dish lost its savor for both Maren and her young family in Sanpete County, however, for it became their standard supper fare. Virtually every night for years, according to her record, she had nothing but wheat and jackrabbit to prepare for her family's supper, until the dish she had once enjoyed became positively distasteful to her. Her family, predictably enough, was similarly affected, to the point that one of her sons, when asked to give the blessing over yet another meal of wheat and rabbit, gave the "prayer" in the following verse:

Rabbit young, Rabbit old,
Rabbit hot, Rabbit cold,
Rabbit tender and Rabbit tough.
Oh please, Dear Lord,
We've had enough.¹⁹

Many pioneer women endured these privations through several months of pregnancy—a fact few historians have appreciated. Unlike today, when well-stocked grocery stores are open around the clock, early Utah women in the so-called delicate condition had to nourish themselves with what they had on hand. At times this could be painfully little, as the story of a woman named Catha illustrates.

Conceiving shortly after her arrival in the Valley in the fall of 1847, Catha and her husband lived on rations of a half pound of flour and corned beef over the winter and were reduced to eating thistle greens and buttermilk by the time spring arrived some months later. To make matters worse, Catha spent the spring days walking beside a team of oxen while her husband followed the plow behind. She did have the good fortune to obtain a piece of bread from the midwife as her due date approached, and some obliging

neighbors—"whose kindness," she wrote, "I shall never forget"—gave her a little more. But nothing she ate over the entire course of her pregnancy ever amounted to the "full enjoyable meal" her body needed.²⁰ Catha was fortunate in that her baby, despite the privations, was a "plump healthy child," but many women were not so lucky. . . .

MOVES & LIMITED RESOURCES

The Saints faced at least two other challenges that compounded the difficulties of establishing a home in early Utah. First, many families, either in response to formal mission calls or their own search for greener pastures, made several moves over the course of their lives in the West. Those making a move frequently left established homes and occupations and started afresh. Such moves were generally done by wagon . . . and could be tiring, difficult, and hazardous. While many . . . faced this challenge at least once in their lives, others faced it far more frequently. Nanna Anderson . . . moved some twenty times by wagon over the course of her married life and lived everywhere from Canada to Arizona before she finally prevailed upon her husband to settle down.²¹

Second, the resources and materials that could be used to furnish these homes were extremely limited and primitive. Rag wicks in a dish of grease and, later, candles constituted the light source for these early homes; rope "springs" and straw-filled mattresses answered for beds. . . . [The] small stove, single table, two chairs, and straw bed that comprised the sum total of Rachel Burrton's home furnishings in 1856 were probably quite representative of what most young couples could expect to possess at the time.²² . . .

While her husband was away and [Leora Campbell, one of the first settlers in Liberty,] was living in a log cabin with no windows and only a hole in the sod roof for a chimney, Leora went into labor just as "an awful storm came up." "The rain came down in torrents," she recorded. "Our house leaked all over, not clear water but mud. There was a place from about the middle of the bed to the head that did not leak. My husband's grandmother was living with us that winter. She put me crosswise of the bed, and put her featherbed over me to keep me dry. She put her quilts under the bed to keep them dry. Wet boards were laid down on my bed for me to lie on. A sheet was hung up to the head of the bed to keep out the

wind and one across the foot of the bed. . . . Thus I gave birth to the first white child born in Ogden Valley.”²³ . . .

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

. . . While a few families were fortunate enough to live both where and when cotton was grown, many of the early Saints, at least for a time, made their textiles from wool or flax. This could be a time-consuming process; flax, for example, had to be soaked in water for some six weeks after it had been picked before it could be spun into thread and then woven into usable cloth. Taking a cue from their Native American neighbors, pioneer women learned how to use native plants like squaw bush to dye their material. And after all this, of course, women did the actual sewing of the clothing or bedding by hand. The whole process was so labor intensive and time consuming that Maren Nielson of Sanpete County routinely worked “all day and most of the night” to keep her growing family in clothes.²⁴ . . .

If necessary, cow or even buffalo hair, which pioneers had carefully collected from sagebrush and preserved as they journeyed west, could substitute for wool. In a pinch, women used animal skins to patch men’s pants.²⁵ . . . Old clothes, and even clothes still in use, were frequently altered and pressed into service. Maren Nielson, for example, regularly made her daughters’ dresses from her own old clothes, while Hans Christensen’s wife parted with one of her skirts in order to furnish her husband with a much-needed pair of pants.²⁶

HOME NURSING

. . . Large families, the prevalence of disease, and inadequate medical care and supplies combined to make this one of the most challenging duties for pioneer homemakers. . . . Church callings and missions took husbands out of the homes for extended periods of time, leaving their wives—who were frequently ill themselves—to take care of a sick family alone. Such times could test even the most proven Saints. After finding herself and four children gravely ill shortly after her husband left on his second mission to California, Sarah Rich, wife of Charles C. Rich and no stranger to affliction, admitted that “to be left alone . . . with a sick family was rather trying.”²⁷ . . .





After the strain of caring for seven children with whooping cough during her family's first winter in Cache Valley . . . Henrietta Williams had to face burying two of them.²⁸ The number of children a family might lose through disease was staggering at times. Rachel Robinson buried seven of her twelve little ones, while of the ten children Teresa Duncan brought into this world, six died before adulthood—four of them dying from diphtheria within one week of each other.²⁹

INCOME

While the men generally took primary responsibility for providing for their families' economic needs, Utah's pioneer women at times shouldered part of this load as well. . . . Sarah Rich and Mary Perkins . . . [sold] eggs, butter, preserves, and dried fruit.³⁰ . . . Ellen Gunderson—who joined the Church in Denmark, immigrated to Utah, and married A. C. Nielson as a second wife in 1880—supported herself by selling rugs and carpets she wove.³¹ . . .

After [Hannah Romney's] husband was called on a mission to England, Hannah learned how to make gloves to support herself and her baby. Finding the market for gloves somewhat depressed at the time, she took up nursing, sewing, washing, "or any kind of work," she wrote, "that I could do honestly." . . . Eleven years later . . . [Hannah] had five children to support. Taking advantage of the construction of the St. George Temple, this good mother, who was concerned that her growing family be "educated and clothed to correspond with the society we mingled with," again went to work . . . washing and sewing for the temple workmen. Washing "all day from sunup to sundown" earned her a dollar.³² . . .

Women fulfilled numerous other duties as well, including farm work, church responsibilities, medical care, and education. . . . Insects, snakes, snow, mud, sun, and disease fought them at every turn and at times it probably seemed as if all nature had channeled its forces against them. . . .

"An awful storm came up. The rain came down in torrents."

—Leora Campbell

MOTIVATION TO ENDURE

. . . In October 1854, at a time when living in Utah promised little more than hard work and hunger, Ann [Burt's] husband decided to leave the company of the Saints for California. When Ann, who was pregnant at the time, refused to accompany him, he promptly sold

the house she was living in and left. At this critical point, Ann received a letter from a wealthy, childless uncle living in her native land of Wales, a place she loved and missed so much that her every attempt to sing "Home Sweet Home" ended in tears. In his letter, Ann's uncle informed her that if she would return to

Wales, he would make her the sole heir of his extensive wealth and property. Homeless and homesick, without a husband, destitute, and expecting a baby, Ann nevertheless refused the offer. Her brief explanation for so doing, written shortly after her husband left, should be considered a classic among the early Saints' statements of faith. "He wanted me to accompany him," she recorded in her diary, "but I could not think of it. It may be better there in a way, but we have come here for the Gospel's sake, and here I intend to stay and weather it out with the rest of the Saints." . . .

In this short sentence, we learn both how and why she and thousands of other Latter-day Saint women faced the rigors of pioneer life. As we have seen, creativity and diligence helped pioneer women meet the challenges they encountered in the valleys of the mountains. Patience, too, and the ability to improvise were important attributes. But Ann Burt's words tell us that more important than everything else . . . in the face of opposition was a firm testimony of the gospel and an unswerving determination to be true to that testimony at all costs. As disagreeable, even fatal, as the bugs, snakes, mud, and disease may have been, they paled into relative insignificance alongside these simple, yet powerful, convictions. ▣

Excerpts from Andrew H. Hedges, "Battle of the Homefront: The Early Pioneer Art of Homemaking," in Ronald W. Walker and Doris R. Dant, eds., Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1999), 119–136.

Pioneer women . . . serve as role models . . . not just because they are faithful but because they are plucky, resourceful women with take-charge attitudes. One good widow sister, for example, worked hard to support her children by taking in washing. She was thrilled when a neighbor gave her a sack of seed peas one day in exchange for her work. She carefully prepared the hard, sagebrush-covered ground for planting, made furrows, and then, on hands and knees, placed "each precious seed the right distance apart." When she had completed the task, she stood up satisfied, turned around, and discovered that their old rooster had followed closely behind and had eaten every pea. She did not wring her hands in despair. She immediately killed the rooster, reclaimed and replanted the peas, and then ate the tough old bird. When summer came, she and her children enjoyed many meals from the pea patch.

*—William A. Wilson,
"Pioneer Oral
Narratives,"
499.*



1 Hannah Isabell Fawcett Nixon, "Biography of Hannah Isabell Fawcett Nixon," 2, 10, Utah State Historical Society.
 2 Rachel Fielding Burton, "Autobiographical Sketch," Church History Library.
 3 Sophy Valentine, *Biography of Ann Howell Burt* (Brigham City, UT: N.p., 1916), 24.
 4 Valentine, 24–25.
 5 Eva Christine Beck Zimmerman Harrison, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 8:50.
 6 Mrs. Joseph Horne [Mary Isabella], "Migration and Settlement of the Latter Day Saints," 19, Utah State Historical Society.
 7 Catha, "Personal Reminiscences," *Woman's Exponent* 21 (April 1, 1893): 149.
 8 Catha, 149.
 9 Horne, 16.
 10 Williamena McKay, Autobiography, Church History Library.
 11 Harrison, 8:50.
 12 Lucina Mecham Boren, Journal, in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952–57) 6:7–18.
 13 Horne, 1.
 14 Histories of the period are rife with accounts of people using such items for food. The preceding list was compiled from "Biography of Henrietta E. C. Williams and Enoch Burns," 15, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University (hereafter cited as BYU Archives); and Nixon, 3.
 15 Leora Margyann Talmadge Campbell, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 4:55; Valentine, 22.
 16 Horne, 15, 19.
 17 Horne, 17.
 18 Valentine, 21.
 19 Maren Kristine Nielson, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 11:303–4.
 20 Catha, 149. Similarly, Hannah Romney of St. George finished out one of her pregnancies having little more than "dry bread with a little vinegar sweetened with sugar" to eat. Hannah Hood Hill Romney, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:267.
 21 Nanna Ameilia Erickson Anderson, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 3:208–15.
 22 Burton, "Autobiographical Sketch." Similarly, Hannah Romney and her husband began housekeeping with "a small cook stove, a bed, three chairs, a small table and enough dishes for three," while Mary Little began married life with "a feather bed, pillows and quilts . . . a few dishes . . . a bake oven, and camp kettle." Romney, 5:266. See also Mary Jane Lytle Little, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Mary Jane Lytle Little," in "Autobiographies of Thomas Evans, Priscilla Merriman Evans, James A. Little, Mary Jane Lytle Little," 93, BYU Archives.

A sister in Spanish Fork used her old copper clothes boiler until it finally wore clear through and was completely useless. New boilers were available only in Salt Lake City. Her husband was too busy plowing to make the trip to buy a new boiler, and because the family horse was being used in the plowing, the sister could not make the trip herself by buggy. Undaunted, she walked the sixty miles from Spanish Fork to Salt Lake City, bought a copper boiler, and carried it sixty miles home. This in itself was an impressive feat, even in those rugged pioneer days. But the thing that made the 120 mile hike really amazing was that when she made that grueling journey, . . . [she] was seven months pregnant.

—William A. Wilson, "Pioneer Oral Narratives," 499.

23 Campbell, 4:54–55.

24 Nielson, 11:304.

25 Horne, 22.

26 Nielson, 11:304; Hans Christensen, "Memoirs of Hans Christensen," 20, Utah State Historical Society.

27 Sarah Dearman Pea Rich, Autobiography, Church History Library.

28 "Biography of Henrietta E. C. Williams," 24–25.

29 Campbell, 4:39; Teresa Ann F. Urie Duncan, Journal, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 9:431.

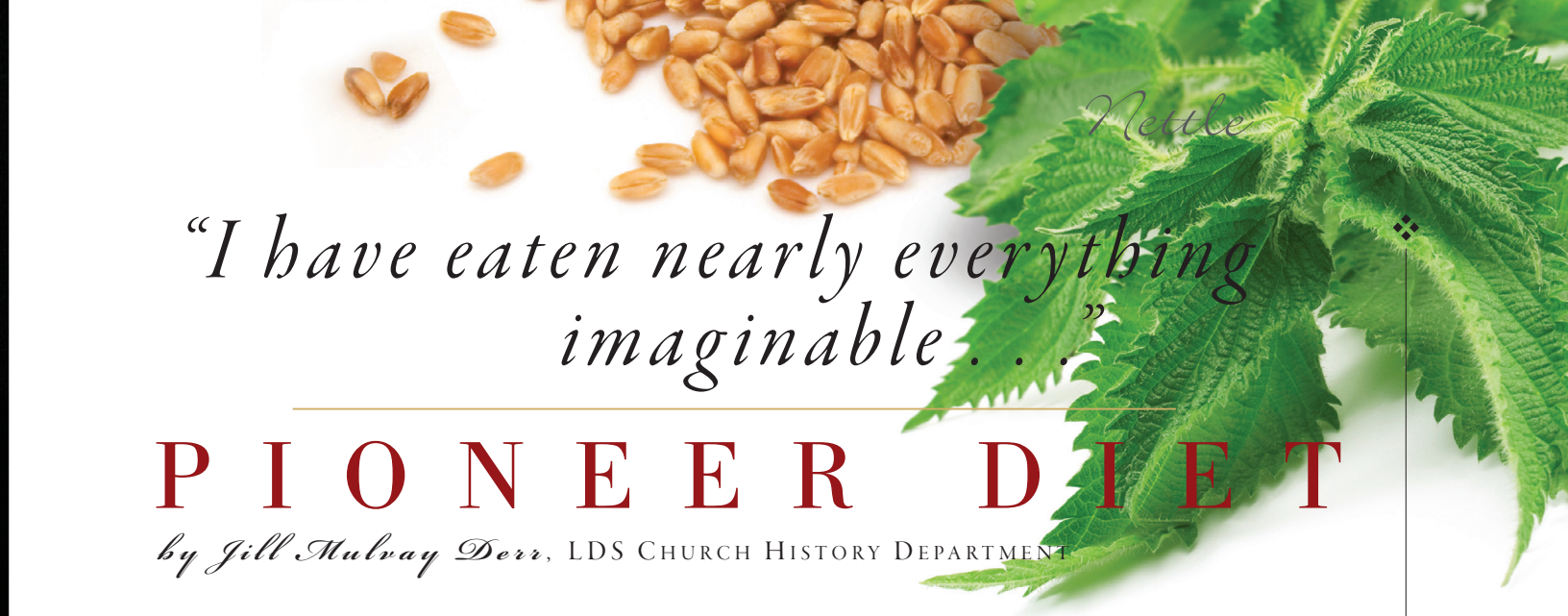
30 Wilson, "Pioneer Personal History"; Rich, Autobiography.

31 Nielson, 11:307.

32 Romney, 5:265, 268.

Visuals: Photos by George Edward Anderson, © BYU Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections: "Moses Burdick, Sunnyside Utah," Three children & dog (2); "[James] C[hables] Snow," family by covered wagon (4); "Richard Zufelt," family & horse in front of home (8); "F. D. Evans, Lehi, Utah," family eating by covered wagon (17); "Henry Sargent, Clinton, Utah," men & boys hunting (22–23). Photos from iStockphoto: abandoned cabin in southern Utah #1646924 (2–3); mouse #2159641 & #2115741 (5); prairie dog #2289991 (5); inside cabin #5146345 (6); planting peas #6264036 (12); rooster #4826421 (12); wheat #4505254 (15); nettle #4615913 (15); dandelions #5064132 (15); vegetables #6113104 (16); black chokeberries #788218 (17); vintage coffee grinder #2335639 (19); barley #5367524 (19). Photos © from the Utah State Historical Society: Hurricane Fruit Festival (20); Fred Bryan's Orchard (21).





*"I have eaten nearly everything
imaginable . . ."*

PIONEER DIET

by Jill Mulray Derr, LDS CHURCH HISTORY DEPARTMENT

As Mormon settlers greeted companies "immigrants with everything from turnips and melons to plum cakes and feasts," food would mark the end of the pioneer journey and the beginning of relationships in a new land. . . .

The journals and reminiscences of Utah pioneers are filled with references to lacking, obtaining, preparing, sharing, and relishing food. This brief survey of pioneer diet reveals that food is a fascinating lens through which one can view Utah's pioneer men and women. . . .

Mary Isabella Horne, who arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in October 1847 . . . welcomed the chance to feast upon venison after someone shot a stray deer that had jumped the fence into the Old Fort. She knitted fishing skein for men who went to the Jordan River to fish and wove together willows and brush to fence off a garden in front of her dwelling, where she planted flowers and vegetables, which "finally grew." At first, she recalled, "very few vegetables could be eaten; they must go to seed for another year." Melon, pumpkin, and squash vines were productive, so, wrote Mary Isabella, "we had melon preserves and squash butter. For coffee, beans, peas, and sliced carrots were used, with a little molasses boiled in it for sweetening. . . . We had only time to make friendly calls on each other to see how we succeeded under difficulties."¹

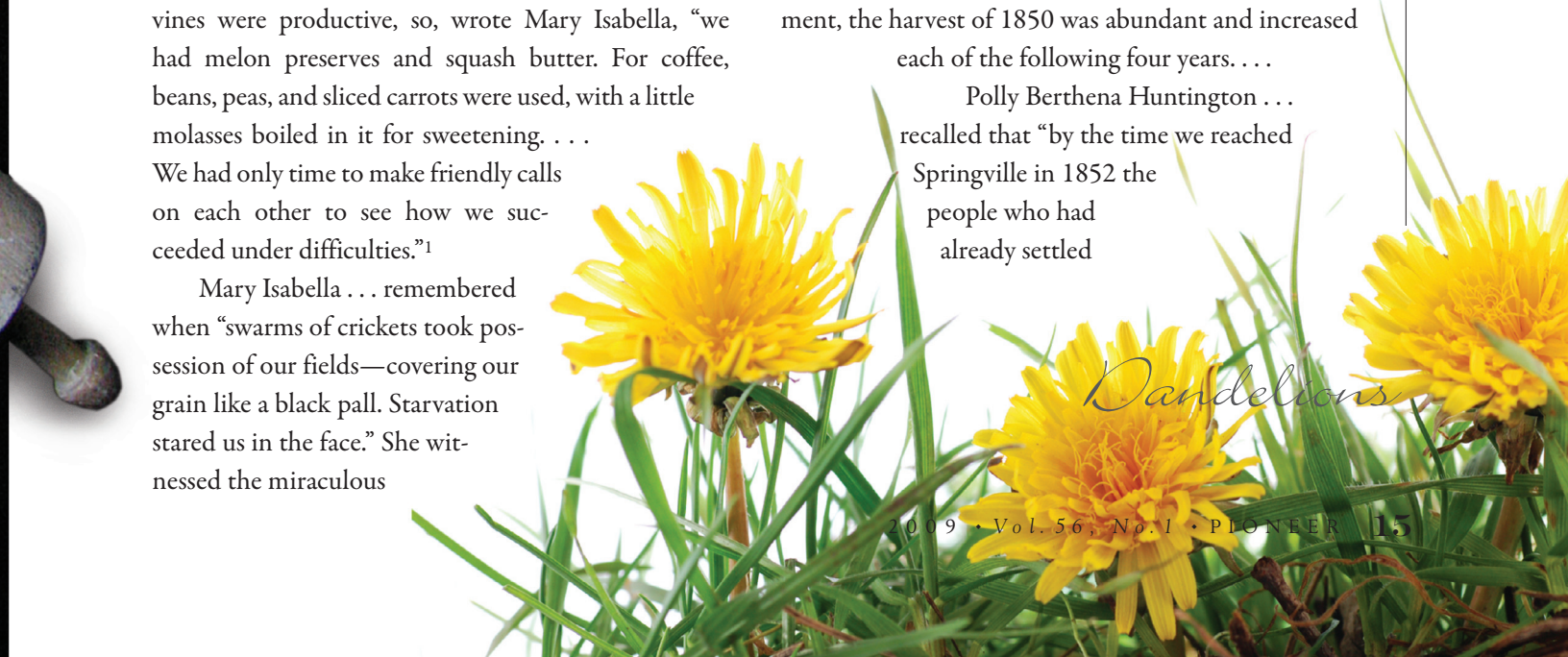
Mary Isabella . . . remembered when "swarms of crickets took possession of our fields—covering our grain like a black pall. Starvation stared us in the face." She witnessed the miraculous

coming of gulls "to save our crops in this barren valley, where we were one thousand miles from any supplies in the East, and seven hundred miles from the West. We must have starved if the Lord had not sent us deliverance. When the crops were gathered we held a grand Harvest Home, all joined in praise and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father for His protection and blessings upon us. Our crops were light, still we had some to spare to the emigrating Saints when they came in. Wheat was traded for flour and a few groceries, and with a little milk and butter occasionally, and our melon preserves, helped us out the next year."² . . .

IRREGULAR HARVESTS

The pioneer experience with food was complex and irregular. Some communities were plagued by drought or grasshopper infestations; others were not. Plentiful harvests in any community might follow or be followed by severe shortages. For example, after the settlers' difficulties during the first two years of settlement, the harvest of 1850 was abundant and increased each of the following four years. . . .

Polly Berthena Huntington . . . recalled that "by the time we reached Springville in 1852 the people who had already settled



Dandelions

there had succeeded in raising sufficient grain and vegetables so that food was available for all. Fish were plentiful in the nearby streams and we did not suffer for the necessities.”³ By contrast, Christian Stucki remembered a time in Santa Clara when “many were facing starvation” because flour was so scarce. His father was sick from living for weeks on pigweed greens and roots, and Christian could remember seeing him go along the street, “so weak he had to take hold of the fence.” When he arrived at the home of a neighbor who had just been to Salt Lake to trade dried peaches for flour, he received a sack of grain and a loaf of freshly baked bread, “which he tore to pieces and ate ravenously with trembling hands.”⁴ . . .

GATHERING OF ROOTS, BULBS, AND GREENS

When food was scarce, pioneers . . . gathered greens and roots as a necessity, whereas in times of plenty, these items used to supplement other foods. Levi Jackman, who arrived with pioneer company of July 1847, found himself short of rations and decided to search for the thistle roots he had seen local Indians eat. “I only regretted that I could not get enough of them. They tasted much [*sic*] like parsnip,” he noted in his journal.⁵ Isaiah Moses Coombs recalled that following the bad harvests of 1854–55, great care had to be taken to preserve the stores of grain. “Greens, wild roots, etc., were freely eaten by all classes so as to spin out the bread stuff until the harvest of ’56.”⁶ According to William Rigby, bad harvests persisted in Lehi during 1856 and 1857, and as a result, he wrote, “my wife and I ate many weeds during the summer that our skin became tinted with green.”⁷ Mary Henrie Cooper remembered that her mother would never eat pigweed and dandelion greens because she had “had to live on them for several weeks one time.”⁸

When Barbara Gowans moved to Tooele with her parents and grandparents in 1856 . . . she recalled going with her grandmother “along the ditch where the willows grew to gather nettles to eat. She would tell me to grip them hard, then they would not sting.” The family simmered

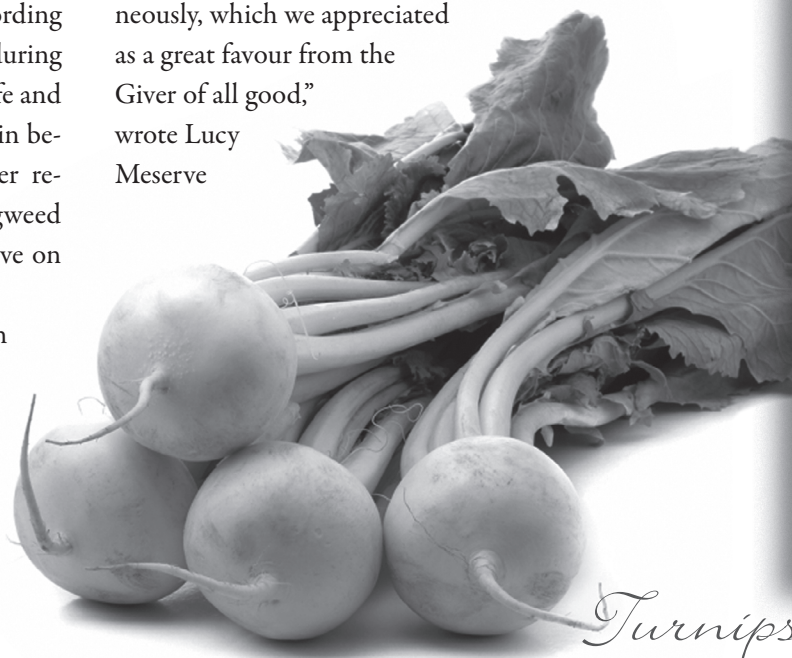
the nettles three times in fresh water to make them edible. . . .⁹ Harmon Gubler recollected eating pigweed and lucerne during his childhood in Santa Clara. “We would walk for miles to find some of the lucerne so that we could have it to eat,” he said.¹⁰ One St. George family lived for six weeks on nothing but boiled lucerne “without even salt or pepper.”¹¹ Others remembered gathering dandelion greens, lamb’s-quarters, wild mushrooms, rose hips, turnips, onions, and artichokes. . . .

“Mother told us one day that she didn’t have a thing for us to eat,” recalled Lorenzo Hadley, “so my brothers and I went out and dug segoes. Mother thought they would cook up like a potato but they didn’t because they boiled all away and just made the water thick. We put salt on it though and lived on it for two weeks.”¹² Some families found that boiling sego and other wild bulbs and roots in milk made a nourishing, healthful beverage.¹³ . . .

“The Segos we children gathered and ate just as a delicacy,” recalled David H. Cannon Jr., noting that “some people ate them at the table, prepared into some very tasty dishes.”¹⁴ Isaiah Cox dug sego bulbs and remembered that “another choice wild delicacy which we dug along the river bottom was the grass nut,” similar to the sego bulb but larger.¹⁵ . . .

BERRY PICKING

“Before we could raise any fruit, the fields abounded with ground Cherries growing spontaneously, which we appreciated as a great favour from the Giver of all good,” wrote Lucy Meserve





Black chokeberries

Smith about her early years in Provo. Taking with her the two sons of her sister wives, she used to go before sunrise about a mile into the field and “pick a five gallon can full of

the precious fruit and go back in time to eat our breakfast.” What the family did not eat, they sold “for a good price as fruit was scarce every where in the Territory.”¹⁶

“The whole country was covered with wild berries,” recalled Hyrum Allen, “namely Service, Chokecherries, currants, Raspberries, Strawberries, gooseberries.” They were “very thick” and of a “large and delicious flavor,” he reported.¹⁷ . . .

Catherine C. Larsen remembered: “When we lived at Sevier, we used to go gathering wild currants, both kinds black and yellow . . . on the banks of the Sevier River. Then we would plan to pick berries in the canyon.

“THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS COVERED WITH WILD BERRIES . . . NAMELY SERVICE, CHOKECHERRIES, CURRANTS, RASPBERRIES, STRAWBERRIES, GOOSEBERRIES. [THEY WERE] VERY THICK [AND OF A] LARGE AND DELICIOUS FLAVOR.” —*Hyrum Allen*

A group of neighbors would get in the wagon and plan to be gone for the day. We would be off early and be up the canyon before it got too hot. There was a scramble for the best bushes. One could hear a merry buzz and see a group of busy people getting berries for the winters fruit supply. At noon we all put our lunch together and had a real picnic. Then we were soon back to work. Some of them would knock the fruit off on clothes lain under the bushes and others were busy gathering what they could by hand. As the sun neared the western hills we would put our things in the wagon and start for home. You



Family eating at an outing in Spanish Fork.

could always hear a bunch of berry pickers as they neared home, their merry songs filled the clear evening air and this is how we made life worthwhile. These outings were of a necessity as well as part of our leisure time fun.”¹⁸ . . .

THE PURSUIT OF SOMETHING SWEET

. . . Sugar was the one item that pioneers consistently mentioned as unavailable or terribly expensive. . . . “It was used only as medicine for the babies,” Isaiah Cox explained.¹⁹ Jane Sprunt Warner Garner recalled her mother returning from a three-day journey to Salt Lake City to get the family’s “first sugar. It was brown sugar and carefully hoarded in a bowl with a cloth tied over it, to be used only on special occasions, generally when company came and we children got very little of.”²⁰ Although scarce, brown sugar was cheaper and more readily available than white.

In the early 1850s, . . . Brigham Young and Church officials imported sugar-beet seed and machinery in hopes of setting up a sugar works in the area south of Salt Lake City now known as Sugar House. While the cultivation of sugar beets was no problem, the imported machinery could not be made to produce sugar, and by 1856 the enterprise was decidedly a failure. . . .

Syrup extracted from sorghum stalks
(termed by some settlers
“sugar cane”)

could be boiled down to thick molasses, and sorghum seed could be used as grain. . . . Fannie Ellsworth Greenwell described how juice was squeezed from the sugar cane by running it through wooden rollers. The juice was then boiled in the large vats of tin. “My father had three of these vats and the juice was boiled first in one then in the second and then into the third vat for the last boiling. He had large homemade wooden spoons to stir the molasses with and wooden dippers to dip it with.”²¹ . . .

Molasses was used in fruit preserves, pies, cakes, cookies, and candy. James J. Adams, who went to Parowan in 1851, said his family used molasses and “a little honey, when we got bees. I remember the first cake mother made out of sugar, we wouldn’t hardly taste it, as it so different from what we were used to.”²² Until a sugar-beet factory was successfully established at Lehi in 1891, molasses “remained the principal source of sweet in the territory.”²³

GRAINS AND BREADS

. . . Families did what they could to obtain corn, wheat, or other grains and get them ground into meal or flour. . . . Corn was the first principal grain in most of Utah’s early households. “I can well remember when flour was Ten Dollars per hundred, and hard to get at that,” recalled

Mary Julia Johnson Wilson. “Most every-

body lived on corn meal, as

we generally had

better luck rais-

ing corn, and

could even

grind it in the

old coffee mill, a

household imple-

ment which most

every family had in those

days.”²⁴ Graters could also be

used for coarsely grinding corn.

. . . Isaac H. Grace from Nephi



Left: Pioneer items used for hand grinding wheat or other grains on display at Daughters of Utah Pioneer Museum in Ephraim, Utah.

"WE HAD A SMALL COFFEE MILL AND IT WENT ALL AROUND IN THE FORT FOR THE PEOPLE TO GRIND THEIR BARLEY IN."

—*Olive Aldous*

remembered that "corn meal bread was used extensively to replace flour or white bread. This type of bread was not very well liked, but became a necessity over white bread." His mother often required that "each of the children must eat two slices of corn bread before they could have one slice of white."²⁵

Some families raised their own wheat, but the majority seem to have bought wheat or flour or traded goods or services for these essential commodities. Men, women, and children also gleaned wheat after farmers had harvested their fields. Millesant London Osborn Parks, who was separated from her husband, arrived in Utah in 1852 with her five children and settled in Bountiful, where she had some difficulty providing for her family: "She and her children would glean wheat then grind it between two flat rocks. She would then make biscuits, giving each child one and a cup of milk for the day's allotment of food."²⁶ During their first autumn in Payson, John Hafen's family "gleaned wheat, enough to furnish food for the winter," and the next fall, they gleaned some seventy-five bushels of wheat.²⁷ Elizabeth Horrocks Baxter's mother "often went barefooted and without breakfast to glean wheat from the fields and then at night would take her gleanings to be ground in the Taylor Mill at Riverdale. She had to crawl across a narrow bridge to get to the mill and had to wait her turn for grinding, yet she was happy in being able to bring home a pan full of flour as compensation for her day's work."²⁸ . . .

Barley was also frequently used. It was the first grain that ripened in the spring. "We had a small coffee mill and it went all around in the fort for the people to grind their barley in," recalled Olive Aldous. "Then they would make mush with it. I tried to eat a bowl full



Barley



with milk on but I just couldn't swallow it."²⁹ . . .

Various alternatives were used to extend the wheat supply. Mixing cane seed with flour made it last longer. The mother of Margaret Warner Williams Wood learned from the Indians to dry roots and greens to grate and mix with flour for bread.³⁰ Utah's native peoples often ground crickets and grasshoppers to mix into bread or added sunflower seeds they had gathered. Martha Ann Clinger Boren remembered eating "bread made from bran with a very little flour mixed in to hold the bread together. When we could not get flour we made bread without. Often mother would scorch some flour which we would make into a mush. We thought this mush the best food, as the taste was different from the bran bread."³¹ Pioneer families sometimes reserved some wheat whole rather than grinding it into flour, soaked the grain overnight in water, and then boiled it for cereal. Because boiled wheat took so long to chew and proved very filling, some families believed it extended their supply of wheat.³² . . .

Bread and cake were often baked in a "skillet," which might be better described today as "an iron Dutch oven or low built iron pot with three legs, which elevated it above the coals or fire, and with a sunk in heavy iron lid, tight-fitting, so that the coals could be placed on the top to insure the necessary heat."³³ . . . Jane Garner took to West Weber's one-room, white schoolhouse a lunch of bread and molasses. "I can tell you it tasted good by luncheon time when the molasses had soaked well into the bread," she affirmed.³⁴ Many families had bread spread with lard for lunch or ate a supper of bread and milk . . .

UTAH VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

. . . The annual Deseret State Fair in 1858 included a vegetable department, which "was not very full" but featured "excellent and choice" samples of squashes, pumpkins, beets, carrots, onions, potatoes, peas, beans, artichokes,

tomatoes, corn, parsnips and other roots that were “not to be excelled in any country.”³⁵ Some vegetables were stored in root cellars; others were preserved in brine. However, pioneers did not remember vegetables with the ebullient affection they reserved for Utah fruit.

Melons seem to have been raised with immediate success and were proudly presented as gifts to arriving immigrants and to President Brigham Young as he traveled throughout the territory.³⁶ Mary Horne credited Leonora Taylor with being “among the first, if not the very first, to plant apple and fruit seeds. The trees were transplanted on their lot in the Fourteenth Ward, where they grew to be very large trees, and produced fine large fruit of excellent flavor.”³⁷ The Fruit Committee of the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society presented to the *Deseret News* a lengthy report of fruit exhibition at the 1858 State Fair, including such apple varieties as Sweet Mountain Home, Mountain Chief, Fall Spice, Lake, Hamilton Tart, Hamilton Sweet, Green Winter, Big Red, Geninton, and Yellow Bell Flower. The committee encouraged more cultivation of grapes, noted fine specimens of Apricots, and recommended the fine flavor and reliability of the Pottawotamie strawberry.³⁸ . . .

When C. N. Teeter of Idaho visited Salt Lake City in August 1863 . . . he rhapsodized about Utah peaches: “There is no end to the peaches this city affords, in fact the whole city with the exception of the business portion is one vast peach orchard, and they have just begun to ripen nicely and in size and quality they cannot very well be surpassed. I ate some yesterday that measured seven and a half inches in circumference.”³⁹ . . .

Preserving the precious harvest was critical for winter well-being. Berries, currants, peaches, apples, and other fruits were easily dried in the warmth of Utah’s summer sun. “We would string the musk melons up on a long string and let them dry,” recalled Harmon Gubler. “Some people used to dry water melons, but we never did because they would dry up to almost nothing.”⁴⁰ Drying fruit had other disadvantages. “When the fruit, apples and peaches were out on the scaffolds, flies rested on them in clouds. It was the bane of dried fruit. And though they were thoroughly washed before



Hurricane Fruit Festival

they were used in the winter, the memory of that black cloud of flies would be forever bright,” declared Hannah Hanson Huntsman of Fillmore.⁴¹ . . .

Polly Huntington of Springville recalled that “preserved fruit” was an important early industry there. Using sorghum as a preserving medium, the women would pack the preserves in fifteen-gallon barrels manufactured by Springville cooper Suminum Blanchard.⁴² . . . In Parowan the jars made by a local potter were used for preserving fruit.⁴³ Laura Smith Hadfield, whose family mostly dried fruit, recalled that her mother also “used to preserve fruit by putting it in cans, putting a lid on, and then [sealing] it with sealing wax.”⁴⁴

Inexpensive glass jars with self-sealing lids, invented in 1859 by L. Mason, became widely available in the 1860s. Home bottling canning quickly became popular among Utah women. . . . Hannah McFarland Bingham of Ogden recalled how “at canning time the women would get together and drive out to North Ogden or Nob Hill . . . to get their peaches. . . . When they went to North Ogden, they would drive a span of mules and it would take them all day.”⁴⁵ . . .

BARNYARD PROVISIONING AND MEAT PRESERVATION

John Hyrum Barton said his orchard in Paragonah “furnished every kind of fruit and berries that could be raised.” “We always had good food,” Barton



remembered. He seems to have relished variety, boasting, “For meat I have eaten nearly everything imaginable: Pork, beef, mutton, chicken, vension [*sic*], duck, rabbit, sage hen, mtn squirrell, mtn hare, mtn sheep, antelope, horse meat, geese and even porqupine.”⁴⁶ Meat, poultry, and fish—staples of the pioneer diet—were sometimes easier to come by than flour. On April 8, 1849, six months after her arrival in the Great Salt Lake Valley, Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman cooked her remaining flour and had “no prospect of getting any more until after harvest.” Nine days later, her brother Edward bought her “a quarter

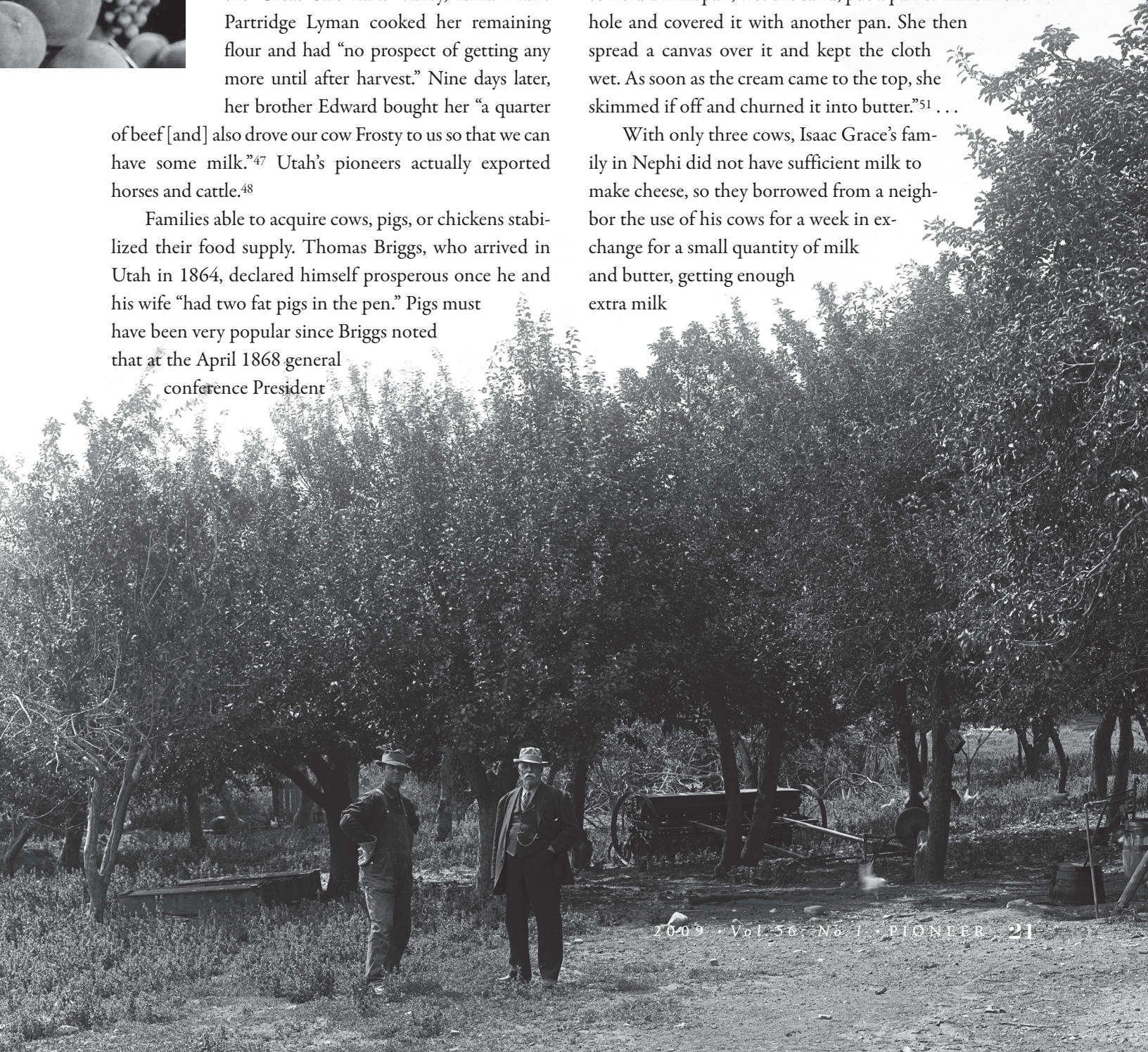
of beef [and] also drove our cow Frosty to us so that we can have some milk.”⁴⁷ Utah’s pioneers actually exported horses and cattle.⁴⁸

Families able to acquire cows, pigs, or chickens stabilized their food supply. Thomas Briggs, who arrived in Utah in 1864, declared himself prosperous once he and his wife “had two fat pigs in the pen.” Pigs must have been very popular since Briggs noted that at the April 1868 general conference President

Brigham Young advised the Saints “to eat less pork and more fowl and fish.”⁴⁹ Barnyard provisioning was widespread because it required neither intensive labor nor large tracts of land. “Everyone had their own cows and had what butter, cheese and milk they wanted. They raised their own pigs and had what meat they wanted,” recalled Hyrum Allen of Huntsville.⁵⁰

Harriet Maria Young Brown “just couldn’t get along without butter,” so when she and her husband helped settle the Muddy, “she dug a hole in the sand large enough to hold a milk pan, wet the sand, put a pan of milk in the hole and covered it with another pan. She then spread a canvas over it and kept the cloth wet. As soon as the cream came to the top, she skimmed it off and churned it into butter.”⁵¹ . . .

With only three cows, Isaac Grace’s family in Nephi did not have sufficient milk to make cheese, so they borrowed from a neighbor the use of his cows for a week in exchange for a small quantity of milk and butter, getting enough extra milk



to “manufacture cheese on their homemade cheese press.”⁵² In October 1853, the editor of the *Deseret News* noted receiving “a cheese, from the MANTI SISTERS, of San Pete county; weight . . . we think from 75 to 85 lbs.” He added: “God bless those dear sisters with life, health, and abundance of the good things of earth, so that next year they make cheese twice as BIG.”⁵³ Butter, cheese, and eggs were important bartering commodities in many communities. . . .

Annie Clark Kimball described her family’s adobe home, built in the 1870s, with “its thirty-foot deep windlass well which kept food supplies deliciously cold when suspended near the crystal water in a strong basket.”⁵⁴ The wells and springhouses could keep dairy products but were usually not cold enough to preserve meat. Because meat attracted flies and rodents, it could not be stored near milk fresh and butter in an insulated milk house.⁵⁵ Fresh pork, mutton, and beef could be eaten immediately and might be shared with family friends. . . . Without refrigeration beef could not be aged, and cooks, therefore, faced the challenge of making tough meat tender with carbonate of soda, perhaps, or by long and slow simmering.

Beef and pork could be preserved through salting down or through corning in a brine of salt, saltpeter (potassium nitrate), and brown sugar or molasses. . . . Fruit could be mixed with cooked meat and preserved in mincemeat. The slaughtering of hogs furnished sausage, bacon, and hams to be “cured” in the smokehouse as well as lard for pies, cakes, and frying.⁵⁶

HUNTING AND FISHING

In many pioneer families, hunting and fishing were critical to the food supply. “Fish and game have always been plentiful here in Utah,” John Henry Ward Lister observed.

Indeed, because “there were no game laws then,” it was “a hunters and fishers paradise.”⁵⁷ During some periods of scarcity, fish were a particularly important commodity. Peter Madsen arrived in Salt Lake City in 1854 and moved immediately to Provo, where, in 1855, he witnessed the terrible infestation of crickets or grasshoppers. . . . He recounted how shortly thereafter people were saved by the fish: “People came to the lake. From Sevier on the south to Salt Lake on the north, they came with wagons and barrels and salt prepared to take fish home with them for food during the winter months. Their crops were destroyed and they were weak from hunger. . . . They all camped along the river near where it empties into the lake and we made preparations to supply them with mullet and trout which were quite plentiful at that time. Having been accustomed to fishing in Denmark when a boy, I was prepared for this important duty of furnishing food for starving people, and I will always remember the scene along the river bank after the first day’s catch had been distributed. The campers were in little groups around the campfires where they were broiling fish on hot coals and eating them with relish that only those who have been through an experience of this kind can appreciate.

“The bishop of Provo sent men to help and all day and all night the fishing went on. The Saints came and remained on the river until they had enough fish salted to last them during the winter; then they left for their homes to give others room who were equally needy. For



weeks the work went on. Nobody ever asked who did the work or who received the fish. We were all comparatively equal in those days and all we asked was enough to eat until we could raise crops to supply us food. I have always regarded this as one of my greatest opportunities for doing good.”⁵⁸

David Moore remembered plenty of fish in the Ogden area, as well . . . wild chickens, ducks, and geese. He recounted how they “would roast turkeys by tying a string to the turkey’s legs and hangin[g] it from a nail in the mantle.”⁵⁹ . . .

James Moss remembered feasting upon the jackrabbits in Grass Valley that were destroying his family’s crops—after his parents “called for the Indians to come and kill the rabbits with their bows and arrows.”⁶⁰ “It, was sure hard for us to get enough to eat during those times when the grasshoppers were so bad,” recalled Lorenzo Hadley. “There were plenty of wild duck and chickens around here but we didn’t have much am[m]unition. Daddy only had a few loads left after our trip over the plains.” The resourceful fourteen-year-old Lorenzo “found a piece of lead that we had fetched from England . . . ham-

mered this out flat and cut some small pieces out for shot and loaded the gun and went down to Greenwell’s slough in West Weber where the ducks were thick.” It was the first time he had ever shot a gun, but he killed a total of nine

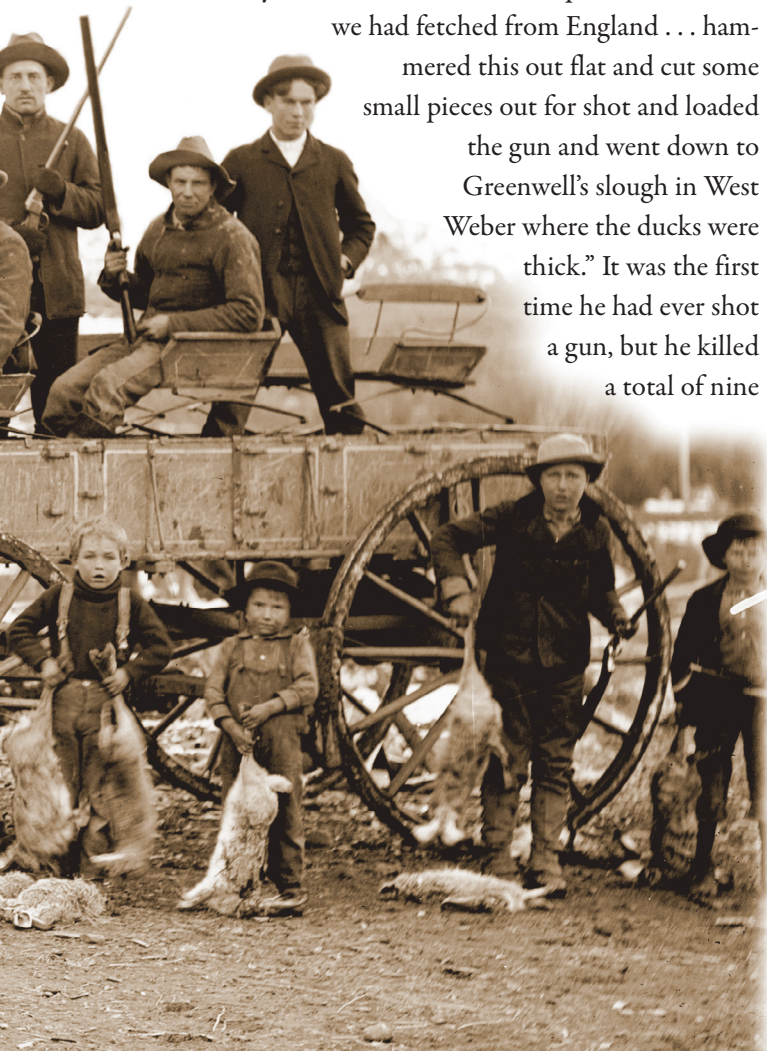
When the food supply of a southern Utah family was exhausted, a group of Native Americans appeared on the scene. They demanded food. When the mother, whose husband was absent, protested that they had none, the Native Americans opened a sack of clover seed, thinking it was flour, and began eating. They found it so bitter they spit it out and then left. The next morning, the mother “found fresh deer meat at the front door. The Indians had felt so sorry for the children having to eat nasty clover [that] they gave them something good to eat.”

—William A. Wilson, “Pioneer Oral Narratives,” 495.

ducks, and he and his brother “cleaned up four or five of them for mother to cook for us that night.” Lorenzo soon found people willing to pay him fifteen cents a piece for dressed ducks. “That fall,” he recalled, “I shot and sold enough ducks to buy myself a suit clothes worth fifteen dollars besides buying all my am[m]unition.”⁶¹ Hunting, like home production of foods, could be an important source of income. Albert Garrison Garner of Huntsville recalled hunting deer and selling their hams “for 9¢ per lb. to Elec Brewer of Ogden who then sold them to miners in Montana.” Garner “also hunted Pine Hens and sold them to a man . . . who ran the Rail Road Hotel in Ogden.”⁶² . . .

THE BLESSING AND PROTECTION OF THE LORD

Among Utah’s pioneers it “was a universal practice to be generous”⁶³ and “a common thing in those days to see one neighbor divide her last pan of flour with her neighbors,”⁶⁴ . . . [This] was in some measure because Latter-day Saints believed they were building Zion, where God’s people would be “of one heart and one mind” and where there would be “no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). They labored in the Great Basin desert, they believed, by God’s appointment and with his approval. “The Lord was with those early day pioneers and provided ways and means for them to exist,” William Bethers testified.⁶⁵ Accounts of seagulls



devouring crickets came to symbolize the numerous occasions and varied ways divine intervention furnished hungry Saints with food.

Sometimes the miracle came through the ministrings of an inspired brother or sister. At the end of her family's journey across the plains, Margaret McNeil Ballard recalled, their food "gave out," and they arrived in Ogden in October 1859 without a cent and very weak with hunger. Seeing a pile of squash in a field, Margaret's mother sent her to beg for some at the home nearby. The old woman who answered Margaret's knock at the door said, "'Come in, come in, I knew you were coming and have been told to give you food.' She gave me a large loaf of fresh bread," Margaret recounted, and later "she came and brought us a nice cooked dinner."⁶⁶

In other instances, nourishment wondrously appeared to sustain a hungry person or family, calling to mind the manna provided the wandering children of Israel or the feeding of the Prophet Elijah by ravens (Ex. 16:14–35; 1 Kgs. 17:6).⁶⁷ Abigail Cox Heaton recounted her parents, who helped settle Manti, were amply supplied with until a summer when "droughts left them almost in the throes of famine." Like other families in Manti, the Coxes lived on greens that summer until even they became so sparse that "women and children scoured the land for greens." Abigail's young brother Walter returned one afternoon with a "few spindly weeds" that "were scarcely enough for one person, let alone a family of seven, and the children crying for food." That night, "the family prayed in humility for something to eat." The next morning, they knelt again in prayer before reluctant, but obedient, Walter left to search for greens. According to Abigail's account, he was successful: "In a short time he returned to the dugout with a basket of crisp stalky greens; even his mother was amazed. He was almost breathless as he told her of having found a large patch of the luscious weeds just as if they had been planted in rows, and on the same ground where many had been searching the previous day. Never had they eaten such good greens, and for days the people of the Manti Valley gathered baskets of greens that seemed to satisfy their hunger and even, some claimed, put flesh on them."⁶⁸

Utah's pioneers gradually built a food supply steady enough to see them through hard times and assure future abundance. They later reflected with pride on the hard work and resourcefulness that forged the tradition they bequeathed, a tradition that included helpfulness, sharing, and a humble acknowledgment of God's hand in their survival and achievement. After all, they were witnesses to the fulfillment of the Lord's ancient promises that in the last days his house "shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and all nations shall flow unto it," that "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose," and, further, that "in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things" (Isa. 2:2; 35:1; 26:6). ■

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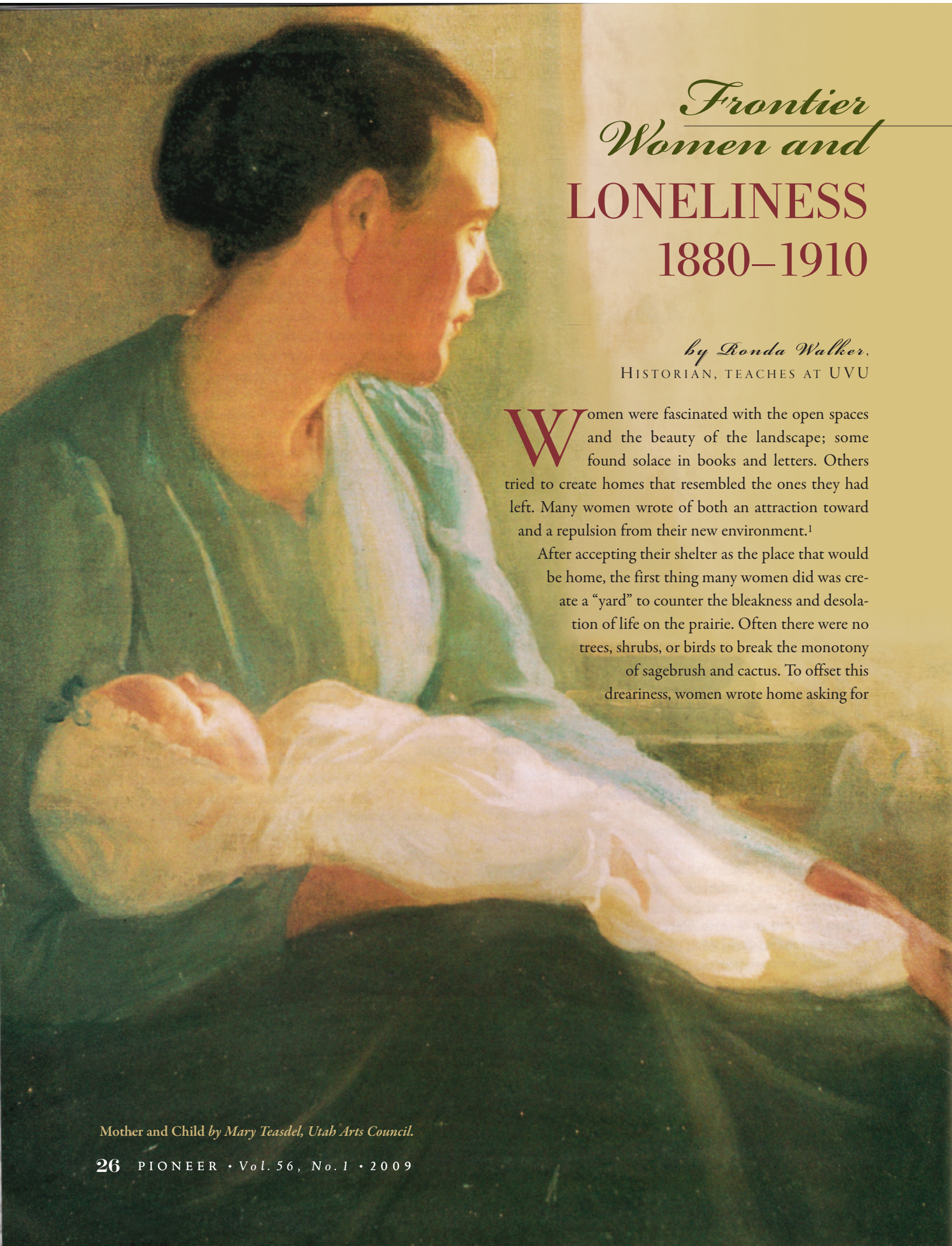
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67 After the widow of Zarephath shared the last of her meal with Elijah, she was blessed with continuing divine sustenance, and her own "barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD" (1 Kgs. 17:16).

68 "The Lord Will Provide," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 7:566–67.

Pioneer artifacts pictured on pp. 14, 18, 30–31 on display at DUP Museum in Ephraim, Utah. Photos by Susan Lofgren.



Frontier Women and **LONELINESS** **1880–1910**

by Ronda Walker,
HISTORIAN, TEACHES AT UVU

Women were fascinated with the open spaces and the beauty of the landscape; some found solace in books and letters. Others tried to create homes that resembled the ones they had left. Many women wrote of both an attraction toward and a repulsion from their new environment.¹

After accepting their shelter as the place that would be home, the first thing many women did was create a “yard” to counter the bleakness and desolation of life on the prairie. Often there were no trees, shrubs, or birds to break the monotony of sagebrush and cactus. To offset this dreariness, women wrote home asking for

Mother and Child by Mary Teasdel, Utah Arts Council.

flowers and vegetable seeds. One woman tells of walking out to the field where her husband was working to take him lunch. When he finished eating she headed toward home, or so she thought. After hours of wandering, she finally walked over a little rise and found her dugout. She quickly wrote to her family in the South asking for dandelion seeds to plant on the roof of her house, so she would always be able to find her home. Other women brought potted plants reminiscent of those from their homes. They also brought canaries, wrens, and other birds in cages to brighten their yards.²

Though women needed color outside, most yearned for ways to make their dwellings comforting. They wove rugs from scraps of feed sacks and worn out clothing, scraped hides, and wove grass mats to lay on the dirt floors. They proceeded to decorate with whatever they could find, including newspapers from home, maps, artificial flowers, and even colorful rocks. One girl recalls that her mother made a mirror by “taking an old black shawl and tacking it smoothly over a board” and placing a pane of “some precious window glass” in front of the shawl.³ Frontierwomen brought with them pump organs, pianos, rocking chairs, books, and china. These occupied places of honor. Arranged, the objects brought a sense of permanence to the new home and a feeling of connectedness with friends and family in the East.

Families took advantage of whatever opportunities they could to socialize. These times usually came in the form of work. Both barn-raising and threshing gatherings were legitimate times organized by men where families could gather for conversation and fun. Despite the hard work and heavy cooking required for these occasions, they were joyful times. When these events happened, other activities were also organized such as dances, play parties, and church functions. This was also a chance to form literary and aid societies to counteract the loneliness.

For the women who could not often participate in regular functions outside of their homes because of transportation, distance, and family and farming obligations, bees were organized. Canning, husking,



Pioneer cabin interior, This Is the Place Heritage State Park.

weaving, and quilting bees were held, providing both goods and associations that supported each other. Sewing and quilting bees were often a group of women who rotated to different homes according to the women's needs. One woman wrote, “I went to Mrs. Low's quilting. There were 15 to quilt and we had 2 quilts, there was indeed meery faces about them.” While they worked, much visiting and gossiping went on. Elisabeth Adams wrote, “I go to Sewing Society at Mr. Pierces. I suppose the affairs of the town [of which she was not a part of] will be discussed over the quilt. Gossip may have made the work go fast, but this was also a time when women could express their concerns, ask questions, swap advice and information, and grumble about husbands and children. Children often played under the quilts as the women quilted.”⁴ This filled another need—a break from the constant caring for one's children.

Friendship quilts were popular items in the late 1800s and were cherished possessions. Women would write home to family asking for scraps of fabric from loved ones' clothing or sewing projects. This would help them feel in touch with their families and also with the latest fashions. These quilts were not likely to be used on a bed, but hung on a wall and prized. A woman that came west with a friendship quilt

treasured the names and addresses of all her friends printed on the individual blocks.⁵ Quilts covered bare walls and reminded the woman that somewhere she had friends. Log cabin quilts were also popular at this time. Each block contained small fabric swatches which could come from feed sacks and were sewn together with thread salvaged from worn-out clothing—something to keep in mind when possessions were meager. Hilda Rose wrote about one of the few times she was able to do something with other women: “We dyed flour sacks and pieced two of the brightest comforts I’ve ever seen. We each pieced seven blocks at home, and used the flour sacks for in between and linings.”⁶ These quilts were frequently given by women who had little to others who had even less. This type of reciprocity was customary. Women took as much pride in sharing their skills and sharing their goods as they did in having something for themselves. Recipes and patterns were readily exchanged and a bond was established between women with common needs.

In order to remain on the frontier, women and their families had to deal with many affliction. Existing accounts show that courage, determination, and an ability to adapt were paramount to survival. Through their letters and journals, we hear their voices, see their struggles, and share their sorrows and their joys. Narratives of these settlers richly characterize their attitudes about day-to-day existence and survival in the frontier West. They stayed, made homes, reared families, endured, and lived the great western myth. ■

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INDIANS, HAIR & LAUNDRY

A Look at Lye Soap

Josephine Sorensen’s grandmother used lye to get rid of her Indian. She “was making soap and the Indians came and thought it was soup. . . . They had a big old wooden ladle to stir it with, and he [an Indian] tried to taste it and it wasn’t very good to taste. They thought when they said it was soap, it was soup, and she got quite a laugh over that. He sure did run.”¹

Lye soap was a staple for laundry days during pioneer times. Making lye soap was an arduous process that in many ways was as reflective of the skills of the soap maker as smooth candy is indicative of a candy maker’s expertise.

There was lots of work to be done to make lye soap. The pioneers first needed to make the lye. Pioneers generally created the lye from ashes. So, the first step in soap making was a huge fire. “When she was a child they used to gather a particular kind of wood; they used to take a certain kind of wood that was most choice. . . . They’d burn wood in their fireplace. Then they’d take the ashes and put in a barrel, put a spigot in the bottom of the barrel; then they’d put the water in it—put the water in until it’d soak the ashes right good and they’d drain it out through that spigot and that was their lye.”² Others would collect ashes over time.

Because large quantities of soap were made at a time, soap making usually took place only once, or at the most twice, a year. It was an all-day job and it was a smelly one because of the fats that were used.

Fats came primarily from the animals that were butchered by the family. Pork rinds were especially popular. Some people used beef and at times mutton found its way into the soap. Others were more particular: “Mother was very particular [about] what kind of fat she put in it—some people will put everything, but not my mother. It had to be certain kinds, anything like

the pork rinds or any excess fat that was from the cooking at all. . . . Of the things she had left over from rendering the lard . . . — these were all kept in metal buckets of course because that was all we had to put them in in those days. Well, she was very much against things like mutton tallow, mutton fat or anything like that. She felt it had a special odor, and she didn't want that odor in her soap. Now she wouldn't use just anything. Suppose someone killed a deer or anything wild like this—she wouldn't have anything to do with that kind of a fat either. It had to be domestic fat.”³

At this point the fat and lye were mixed. A long wooden stick or metal spoon was used to stir the lye and fat mixture. There were three benefits to the long stick. It allowed the soap maker to stand back from the less-than-aromatic mixture, it prevented burns from boiling lye, and the stirring kept the boiling under control while providing the soap with a smooth, rather than a granulated mixture.

In many ways making soap was reminiscent of candy making for several of the interviewees concerning soap making. They talked of letting the soap drip from the spoon to see if it was thick enough, of testing with fingers to determine consistency just as their mother did for candy, and of making sure that “it starts stringing like candy, like taffy candy, oh more like molasses candy.”⁴ Once the right consistency was reached, the soap was poured into molds to set. After it was set, it resembled large bars of fudge.

But, the soap would be sadly lacking in quality if it were the color of fudge. The darker the soap, the more impurities it contained.

As time went

on and ingredients, like store-bought ash and oil, were easily available, the bars of soap were very light colored—a pearl color. During pioneer times, however, the bars were generally gray, with the best soap being light gray.

Everyone agreed that lye soap was harsh soap. The interviewees agreed that it was used for laundry. Some would cut little bits of soap to use so that there was no soap remnant on the clothes. Washing dishes was also a universal use. Some just dropped the bar into the water. Others grated tiny bits of soap into the dishwater.

A few interviewees vehemently stated that lye soap was too harsh for washing hands, while others were certain that it was much too harsh to bathe in. However, one gentleman declared, “It was plenty strong, but it got you clean.”⁵ All agreed that it smelled awful.

One common use for the soap was to wash hair. Lura Redd talked of her Aunt Vilo, who tried lye soap for shampoo: “Aunt Vilo washed her hair once with it and then she said that makes it so nice and shiny. And she said she washed it in homemade soap. And she got the idea from Aunt Jane. You see, Aunt Jane lived in Arizona after she was driven out of Mexico and she'd take in boarders. One woman from the East, New York I think, said, ‘If I had some soap I'd wash my hair.’ And she said, ‘Oh, I didn't buy it from the store. I had a woman back there make it.’ Aunt Jane said, ‘Well, I make it.’ And she got her a bar of it. And the woman looked at it and smelled it and said, ‘Well, that's it. Now I can wash my hair.’ And so that's the reason Aunt Vilo tried it and it looked beautiful, shiny.”⁶ In pioneer times lye soap was regularly used for washing hair.

While some women now enjoy making small, scented soaps, the days of pig rinds and ashes have virtually disappeared. Buying laundry detergent, soap, and shampoo is much simpler and more aromatic. However, the making and using of lye soap is an interesting scrap of pioneer heritage. ▣

1 Josephine Sorensen. All interviews by Judith P. Snyder, *Soap Making, the Evolution of a Lore*, 1972, BYU Folklore Archives.

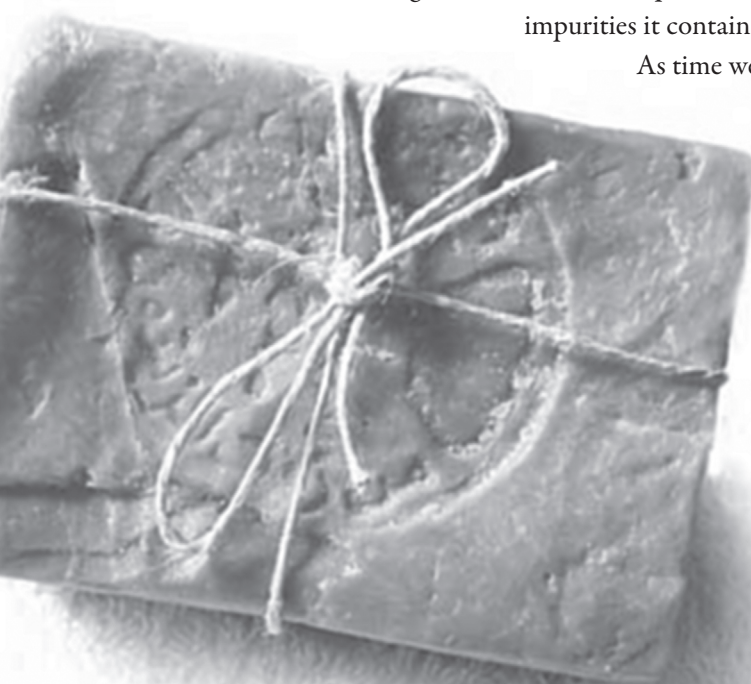
2 G. V. Windom.

3 Mrs. Larsen.

4 Esther Nicholes.

5 Rulon J. Dunn.

6 Loraine Ream.



The Progress of Pioneer **HOMES, FURNITURE, & CLOTHING**

by *Milton R. Hunter,*
COUNCIL OF THE SEVENTY, HISTORIAN

Year after year a stream of colonists flowed into the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. Each new group was confronted with the problem of building homes. . . . [Eventually] these hardy frontiersmen in all the pioneer settlements, probably after the crops had been harvested, [were able to] put floors in their cabins. They were made from logs, flattened on one side with the adze. In due time, these floors were covered with homemade carpets.

As time passed and the founders of Utah became more prosperous, the log cabins were replaced by more durable and beautiful buildings. In many of the Utah communities, rock houses were erected. Some of them were composed of cobble rock, or loose stones, worn smooth, that had been washed down from the mountains and had been left in the beds of the old streams. Others were made of rock hewn into the desired shapes by stone masons. Possibly the most beautiful old homes of early days were those made of rock. Many of them can be seen still standing in various parts of the State, especially along main highway between Salt Lake City and Brigham City. A Welsh emigrant named Shadrach Jones and his father planned and constructed many of them. They were made to be very durable, their walls being two feet or more thick.

Some of the better-class pioneer homes were of good architectural designs, colonial in style, and composed of very high grade materials. It was not uncommon to find the better homes roofed with tiles or shingles. Nels Jensen migrated from Denmark in 1853 and began making tiles for roofing. They were nine by fifteen inches in size. As they lapped one over the other, they formed a rainproof roof.



Many of the homes were beautifully paneled with native pine. All of them had fireplaces and some were equipped with beautiful mantles. From the fireplaces the cheerful heat warmed the rooms on cold winter evenings. Also, during the earliest period, much of the cooking was done over the open fire.

Between 1847 and 1869 the Utah homes gradually grew more spacious and more comfortable, but their basic design remained the same. They retained the pioneer simplicities. Many of them had been so well built that their owners received high rentals for their use. . . . At the completion of the transcontinental



railroad, Mr. Marshall, representative of the Union Pacific paid Israel Ivins the fabulous sum of \$125 a month for the rental of his home.

The coming of the railroad to the State greatly altered Utah architecture . . . making possible the bringing into the West pressed brick and other materials from the East. Gradually the houses made of adobes became relics of the past. The people of the Great Basin imitated the East, which, in its turn was imitating the gaudy extravagances of the Second French Empire. Cornices, porches, floriated machine-cut brackets, turrets, towers, and bay windows broke the old rectangularity of the Utah pioneer homes.

As a rule, the Utah pioneers manufactured their own furniture. The rocking chairs were usually made of quaking aspen, often beautifully carved by hand. Kitchen tables, chairs, cupboards, and bureaus were usually home manufactured. Chairs, made by weaving willows together for the seats and securely fastening them with buckskin, graced the rooms; and well-made rag carpets were usually found covering the floors in homes of the Utah pioneers.

But in addition to the home-made products a number the emigrants hauled beautiful pieces of furniture across the plains to Utah. Much of it was skillfully carved and handsomely upholstered in tapestry wool mohair or silk. It was of the “Empire” style, a type of colonial furniture that originated about the time of the Revolutionary War. Much of it was manufactured in New York City.

Most of the pioneers brought across the plains irons and tongs, kettles, bake ovens, flour bins, brass pails, copper teapots, candlesticks, and spinning wheels. . . . Harriet Decker Young, in the first company, brought glass lamps.

But after immigrants arrived in their new Zion . . . many of them were forced to improvise their own utensils. There were times when it was impossible to secure metal because of freight rates from the States, and before metals were mined in Utah many of the pioneers used wooden utensils. Churns, buckets, meat barrels, tubs, and washtubs were made of red cedar. Even spoons, butter paddles, butter bowls, molds, and wash basins were made from wood.

In most of the homes the bed ticks, or mattresses, were filled with straw. Each year the old straw was exchanged for new. Some of the pioneers stated that excellent beds could be made with cat-tail ticks. Mrs. Simmons Berry, a pioneer of Lehi, wrote: “Fill your ticks as full [of cat-tail heads] as would want your feather bed to be. . . . You will be delighted with it. All lumps will have fluffed out and you will be able to sink deep into warmth and comfort such a feathers do not have.”

As one could imagine, the pioneers had not been in Utah long when the need came for new clothes. But they were a thousand miles from the nearest store and so must make their own.

[Many families] owned a few sheep. [Often] pioneer girls sheared the family herd, carded and spun the wool, wove the cloth, and made their own dresses.

But much work had to be done upon the wool before it finally appeared in the form of cloth. After the completion of the shearing, the fleece was scoured and cleaned of all grease. Then it was carded. The women placed small bits of wool between the cards and pushed and rolled it until every knot was removed. Then the thread was made on old spinning wheels and was ready to be woven into cloth. Usually the loom that was used for weaving was homemade.

If a plaid or striped cloth was desired it was necessary to dye the thread into the proper colors. If grey cloth was wanted, black and white wool were mixed together at the time of making the thread. Dyes were not to be found wrapped up in neat packages and purchased at the stores. They must be found in plants that grew in Utah. The colonists soon discovered that sagebrush with alum made green dye; creosote was used for green colors also; walnuts supplied brown, as did onion skins from a certain kind of onion. They used peach leaves for brown-green; madder berries and roots for purple and red; and to make yellow they steeped rabbit brush. The founders of Utah asserted that these were fast dyes and colors.

Necessity caused women to learn the art of pattern making. There were a few cases in which women brought patterns with them to Utah. We can be sure that very good use was made of them. The story is told of an emigrant from England, a seamstress by trade, who brought to Utah a pattern for men's pants. It is claimed that early on every pioneer man wore pants cut from that pattern. If the men were small, the pattern was folded smaller; but for large men, a few inches were added on all sides. ▣

Excerpts from Milton R. Hunter, "Pioneer Life in Utah," Utah, the Story of her People, 1847-1947: A Centennial History of Utah, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946), 145-53.

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Pioneer Magazine . . .

I am a member of Daughters of Utah Pioneers and just adore your magazine. I need to renew mine and my siblings subscriptions. This will be their Christmas from me.

—Rhea C. Orr, St. Anthony, Idaho

I belong to DUP International but I also enjoy your magazine very much. The articles are so well written and documented. I am enjoying learning Utah history. The art work is exceptional; two of my favorites, art and history.

We have lived in Utah for 19 months and are in our 70's. Keep the great magazines coming.

—Thank you, Alyce B. King, Oakley, Utah

The 2008, #2 issue of *Pioneer* had a short article on the Jews [p. 23]. [**Please note this information**]: The first Jewish business was that of Alexander Neibaur, the first Jewish convert. He arrived with the 1848 Brigham Young company. He was a dentist and match manufacturer, which he had practiced in Nauvoo. Although he was a Mormon convert, he always identified himself as a Jew.

In 1853 Julius Brooks (Bruck) returned to Breslau from California and married 16-year-old Fanny Brooks (his cousin). They started for California on their honeymoon, arriving in Galena, Illinois, too late to continue. In 1854 they continued on, arriving at the campground in Salt Lake City July 9, where they met Alexander Neibaur. It being too late to continue, they lodged at Neibaurs until the spring and then continued their journey to California. They returned and settled in Salt Lake in 1864.

After Brigham Young ordered that the Mormons not trade with the Gentiles, the Brooks found themselves without tenants for their real estate properties and asked Neibaur to take them to Brigham and ask him to buy their properties. Brigham told them that everything would work out and within a few days their properties were rented.

The Isabell Brooks of 1853 tax record was not Fanny and most likely not a Jew.

—Sincerely, George Riser, Huntingdon Valley, PA



The Sons of Utah Pioneers wishes to honor
JOHN H. MORGAN, JR. *for his generosity as*
the SPONSOR of this issue of Pioneer magazine.

John H. Morgan, Jr., was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 11, 1923, to John Hamilton Morgan, Sr., and Lucille Lloyd.

A graduate from the University of Utah, John married Daisy Richter in 1950, and they had four children. Their son, John H. Morgan III, passed away in 1978. Both Daisy and a daughter, Patricia, passed away in 2001. John married Wilma Clayton in 2002 and they reside in both Salt Lake City and St. George.

John organized the Uintah Wyoming Oil and Gas Company in 1951 and served as its CEO until 1995. He has been chairman of the board, president and CEO of Morgan Gas & Oil Company since 1982.

John's life of service includes two years with the 44th Infantry Division in Europe, president of the Twin Peaks Chapter of the SUP, president-elect of SUP, and a member of the Salt Lake Rotary Club, the Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Alta Club. As a member of the LDS church, he has served as a counselor in the bishopric and on a stake high council.

He was the cofounder, with Daisy Morgan and Sylvia Wunderli, of the World Senior Olympics in 1987. In 2008, the Huntsman World Senior Games attracted almost 10,000 seniors from all 50 states and many foreign countries.

John serves as the Scholarship Chairman for SUP. The John Morgan Scholarship Program has presented over six hundred \$500 or \$1000 scholarships, primarily to students struggling with challenges and adversity.

Typical of these students is **Jasmina Halilovic**. She was born in eastern Bosnia in 1989. In 1992 when the conflict in Bosnia started, her house was burned to the ground and most of the neighbors were killed. Jasmina's family hid in the nearby woods and then had to flee to Srebrenica, about 60 miles from their home. In Srebrenica the family stayed in housing provided by the United Nations. Food was so scarce Jasmina's father had to go out each day to scavenge for sustenance. For almost three years the mainstay of their diet was Spam.

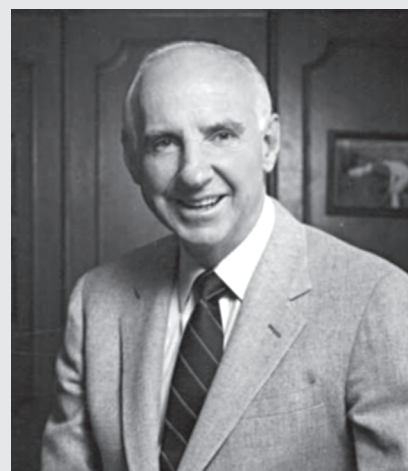
While in Srebrenica, Jasmina's mother had a baby boy. In July of 1995, when the baby was just two months old, war came to Srebrenica and the family had to flee again. Jasmina's mother wrapped the baby in a blanket, held Jasmina's hand, and left their home. Her father followed, carrying only a bag of clothing.

The family hoped to travel to the free territory of Tuzla, where relatives of her mother lived. Jasmina recalls the tragic separation from her father: "One of the men leading our group came up to my dad and told him he had to run through the forest—that only women and children could go with them. My dad put his head down and started to cry—my mom was crying also. He kissed us all; he looked at my mom and told her to take care of us and that he would see us in a couple of days. My dad waved and that was the last we ever saw of him."

Jasmina's mother and the two children made it to Tuzla. When Jasmina was 10 years old, her mother decided to come to the United States because "things were not getting any better in Bosnia." The family settled in Salt Lake City. Jasmina has now graduated from high school.

She records her experience applying for a scholarship: "I had an interview with Mr. Morgan for the scholarship that he was giving to deserving students. When I first walked into a room where Mr. Morgan was going to interview me I was so nervous. But after I sat down and he asked me why I think I deserved it I just poured my heart out and told him how bad I wanted to go to college and how I will make him proud. Not long after the interview he sent me a letter telling me that I got a scholarship. That was one of the happiest days of my life."

John Morgan's grandfather, early Utah pioneer John Hamilton Morgan, also had a significant impact on education in Utah and is featured in the following article. ▣



John H. Morgan

SOLDIER, EDUCATOR, MISSIONARY

John Morgan, a handsome, auburn-haired youth of 13 was present when Abraham Lincoln give his speech “A house divided cannot stand.” Seven years later the country was embroiled in a nasty war between its citizens, and 20-year-old John enlisted in the Union Army. For the next few years young John would fight for a cause he believed in—civil liberty.

John’s regiment (the 123rd Regiment of Mounted Infantry of Illinois) took part in a large number of sanguinary conflicts in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. The most important, perhaps, was the defeat of the Confederates in the capture of Selma, Alabama, on April 2, 1865. Captain Owen Wiley gave a graphic account of the fighting at Selma, the last stronghold of the Confederacy, and then he wrote: “John Morgan, Company I, is deserving of the highest credit for his gallantry in action in being the first to plant a flag upon the rebel works and for being in the extreme advance until all the rebel forts were captured, planting our colors upon each of them successively.”

Because of his leadership, ability and valiancy, John was offered a captain’s rank if he would re-enlist, but this soldier had other plans. He mustered out of the army and left for home two months after the capture of Selma.

After graduating from a commercial college, John and a friend set up an accounting business. Because of the war, the economy was very unstable, and both young men realized it would take them a long time to make a success of their accounting business.

They learned that a man by the name of William Jennings was looking for two men to drive a herd of Texas Longhorns from St. Louis to the Great Salt Lake Valley. This would give them a chance to make some money as well as see a new part of the world. The more they talked it over the more excited they became.

It was December 23, 1866, when the two young men delivered the cattle to William Jennings’s corrals, between 7th and 8th South and between Main and State streets, where the Sears Store is today.

They spent the Christmas season with the people of the Great Salt Lake Valley, rooming in a hotel called the Salt Lake House, located on the east side of Main Street, north of Second South. John was beginning to really like the people of the Great Salt Lake Valley—but his friend moved



on as a bullwhacker on one of the immigrant trains headed west. So, at the age of 24, John Morgan found himself alone in the Great Salt Lake Valley.

What he found were a people eager for education but no schools that offered training above the reading, writing and arithmetic level, taught in the LDS ward meeting houses. Here was a place to start a commercial college for young men and women to go into business. At the beginning of the new year—1867, John Morgan opened The Morgan Commercial College. He was so successful that he had to arrange for more space. Mr. Morgan consulted with Nicholas Groesbeck, who owned a building between 2nd and 3rd South on Main Street. The fall of 1867 the college opened at the new location—and it was also this fall that John Morgan was baptized into the LDS church. (See “An Educational First on the Frontier,” *Pioneer*, Summer 2001, 17–20.)

John Morgan’s first home in Salt Lake City was with the family of Joseph L. Heywood, bishop of the Seventeenth Ward. John was not, at this time, a member of the LDS church nor had he given it much consideration. One morning, on coming down to breakfast, he related to Mrs. Heywood an impressive dream he had had during the night in which he dreamed that he was back in North Georgia near the battlefield of Chickamauga, where he had fought in the Civil War, and he was traveling southward on a familiar road running from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Rome, Georgia. In this dream he suddenly came to a fork in the road and for a moment was undecided as to which fork led to Rome. Then he was amazed to see President Brigham Young standing in front of a large tree in the fork. President Young told him the right hand road led to Rome, but that if he would take the left-hand road, he would have an experience that would give him a strong and abiding testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon. Laughingly, he asked Mrs. Heywood what she thought of it. “I am not interested in the Book of Mormon or its divinity, but I am interested in knowing what you think of my dream.”

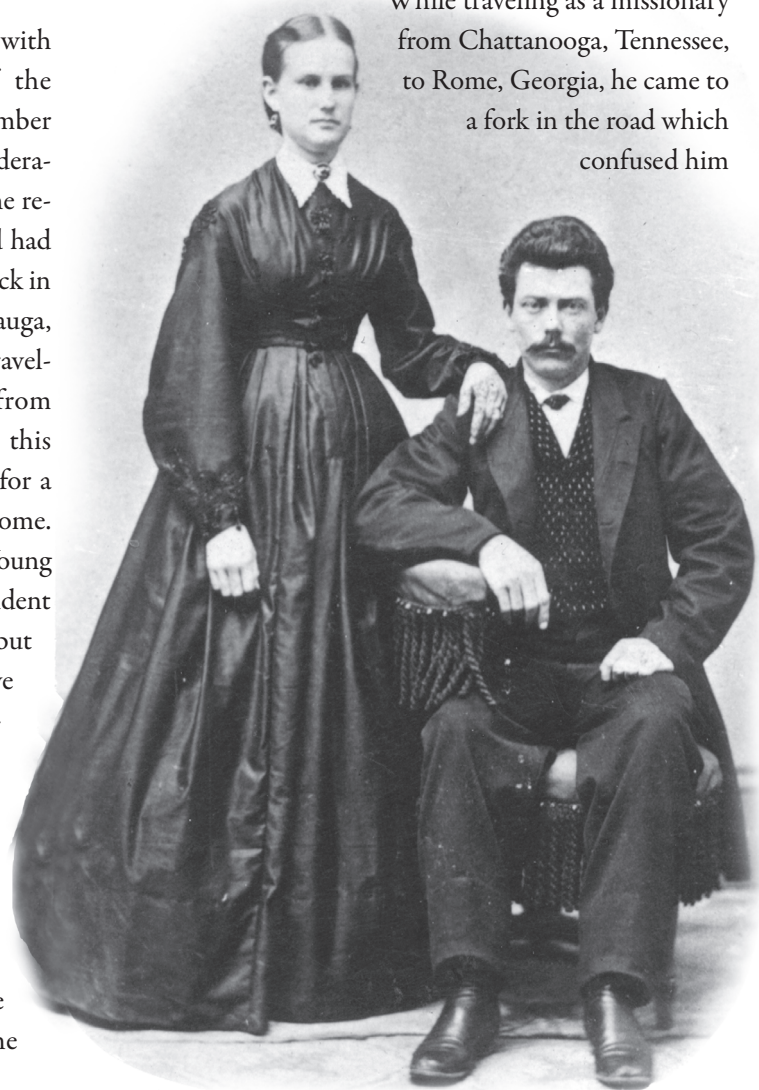
Mrs. Heywood predicted that he would soon become a member of the Church and that in due time he would be called to do missionary work in the

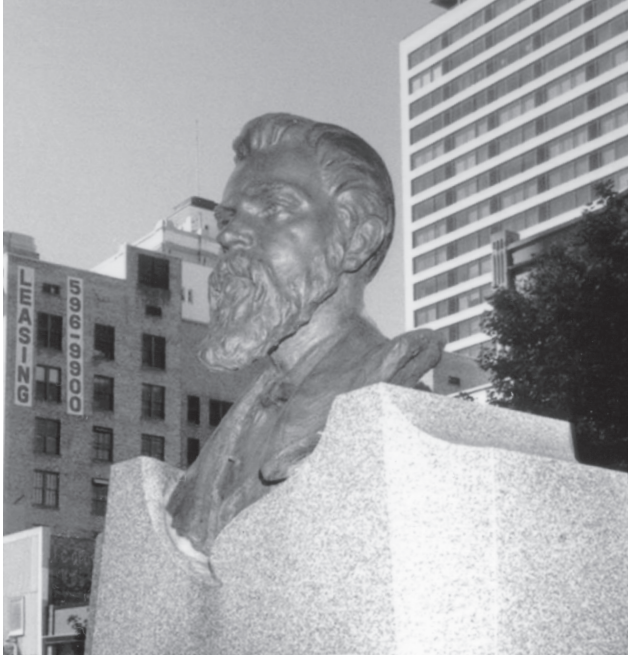
Southern States. She told him that while laboring in the South he would come to the fork in the road he had seen in his dream and that he was to follow President Young’s instructions and take the road to the left.

John’s reputation in education continued to grow as did his school, and he attracted students from all over the valley and from outlying areas as well. Mr. Groesbeck, the building’s owner, sent his own children to this school, including his eldest daughter, Helen Melvina “Mellie.” Because her mother needed her at home, Mellie was only able to attend the college for a few months—long enough, however, for a courtship to develop between Mellie and John (pictured below). Eight months later, October, 1868, John and Mellie were married.

As predicted by Mrs. Heywood, John was called about 10 years later as a missionary to the Southern States.

While traveling as a missionary from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Rome, Georgia, he came to a fork in the road which confused him





Located downtown between 200 and 300 South, a granite monument was erected in 1969 to honor John Morgan and the Morgan Commercial College.

and caused him to stop. He suddenly realized that the fork in the road that lay before him was the identical place he had seen in his dream 10 years before. He vividly recalled the counsel given in the dream to follow the left-hand road which would lead him to a remarkable experience. Thrilled with his experience, he took the left-hand road and continued his journey. After an hour's walk, the road led him to the rim of a beautiful valley in North Georgia. From a passerby, he learned that the name of the place was Heywood Valley, having the same spelling as the Heywood family, and that it was settled and farmed by some 23 prosperous families.

In high spirits he traveled on and called at the first house he came to, where he was received with true southern hospitality. Filled with the spirit of his mission, he spent the entire evening in gospel conversation. Three hours were engaged in his effort to explain the first principles of the gospel to his newly made friends. As the interview closed, the head of the house brought out the family Bible, and, to Elder Morgan's amazement, he found that many of the passages of scripture which he had used in explaining the principles of the gospel were underscored and in asking who had marked the passages was advised that 10 days before, a kindly looking man in very tidy apparel, and seemingly possessed of great intelligence, had come to their home and had, with their permission, marked their Bible, explaining to them that another

would come in a few days who would teach them the meaning of the marked passages and explain to them in its completeness the great Plan of Salvation. They did not know who the stranger was, from whence he came or where he went.

Elder Morgan called successively on each of the families in Heywood Valley and in every home they had had the same experience with the stranger. Elder Morgan was successful in converting and baptizing the inhabitants thereof until all but three families were led into the waters of baptism. Among those converted was a Methodist pastor, who was made the presiding elder of the Heywood Branch, and the building he had previously used as a Methodist church, now became a Mormon meeting house.

While a guest at the home of his first converts in Heywood Valley, Elder Morgan started writing an epistle to the Saints in Georgia and Alabama, in particular, and to the people of the world generally, setting forth clearly and convincingly the answers to three weighty questions: Whence come we? Why are we here? Where do we go from here? This treatise, "The Plan of Salvation," later became one of the best and most universally used tracts published by the Church.

Morgan's lifetime accomplishments include

- Becoming first president of the Southern States Mission.
- Colonizing the San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado.
- Opening the first Bureau of Information on Temple Square, at the request of Lorenzo Snow.
- Serving as member of the Utah Territorial Legislature and chairman of the House Committee on Education.
- Organizing the Salt Lake County Teacher Association.
- Spending the last 10 years of his life as a member of the LDS church's Council of Seventy.

John Morgan died suddenly in Preston, Idaho, on August 14, 1894, at the age of 52. ▀

Excerpts from "The Faith of Our Pioneer Father," by Bryant S. Hinckley and from presentation by Karen Matthews at John Morgan Scholarship presentation.

Photos courtesy Karen Matthews. Painting of Civil War cavalry orderly (34), by Edwin Forbes, courtesy Library of Congress.

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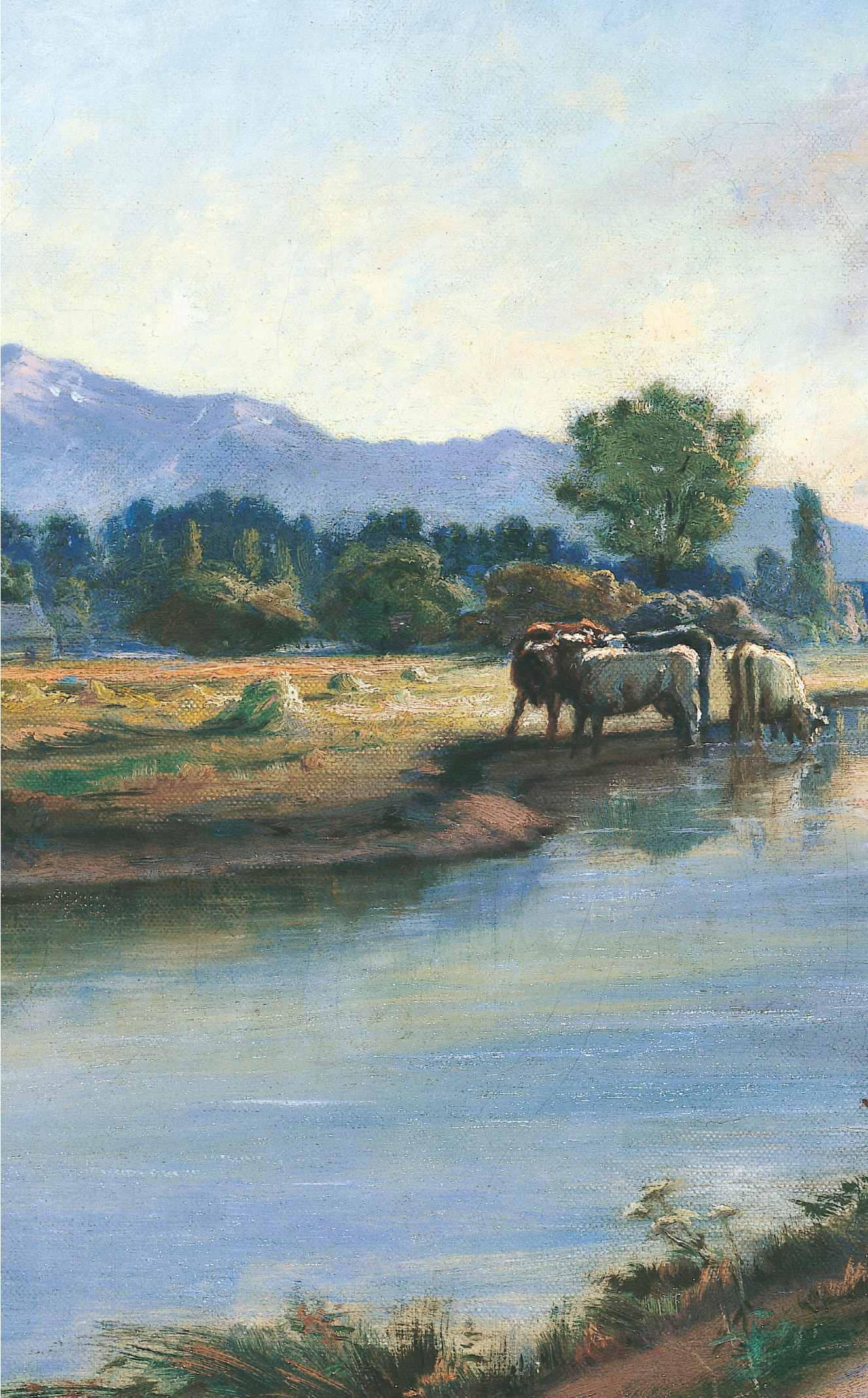
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